- **Entertainment / A30** Dollywood: Luis Manzano joins 'Kampanerang Kuba'
- **Across / A17** Koreans bar Cebu City mayor's wife, face deportation
- **World / A12** Schroeder calls for early election in Germany
- **News / A2** China invites RP to join naval exercise
- **Sports / A26** Barry stars as Spurs draw first blood in Western Finals

Gov't files smuggling raps vs oil executives

By Armand N. Nocum

FINANCE and customs officials yesterday filed charges against executives of an oil company at the start of a crackdown on big-time smugglers, promising to spare no one.

Charged before the Department of Justice were officials of Petroline Resources Inc., reg-

GOV'T/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Malacañang also clueless on Mike A's whereabouts

By Gil C. Cabacungan and Michael Lim Ubac

THE OPPOSITION yesterday demanded that he testify at a planned House probe into "jueteng" payoffs, but where is the First Gentleman?

MALACAÑANG/ A6

OUTSIDE THE KULAMBO!

Tuesday, May 24, 2005 ★★ 46 pages / 4 sections / Vol. 20 / No. 165 P18 website: www.inq7.net

SEÑERES: I'm so happy with this decision.

I didn't get a centavo from 'jueteng'–GMA

President gives assurance to evangelical bishops

By Christine O. Avendaño and Armand N. Nocum

AS ALLEGATIONS of "jueteng" payoffs swirled around her family, President Macapagal-Arroyo made one thing clear yesterday.

"I can assure [you] I am one President that did not receive any payola," Ms Arroyo told leaders of evangelical churches who prayed over her after the opening ceremonies of the Metro Manila Franklin Graham Festival Congress of Evangelism.

The bishops at the pray-over held at the Crossroad 77 Covenarium in Quezon City said they believed her.

It was the first time Ms Arroyo made such a statement following published allegations that her husband, First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, and their son, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, were beneficiaries of jueteng protection money.

Manila Rep. Bienvenido Abante Jr., a bishop of the Metropolitan Bible Baptist Church and chair of the Alliance of Baptist Councils, told reporters that he was present when Ms Arroyo gave the assurance during a private meeting with evangelical bishops.

"She told us here very frankly that never did she receive any payola. And we believe that. I don't think that the President would lie before all the bishops," Abante said.

Asked if Ms Arroyo also gave the same assurance in behalf of her family, Abante said: "I would not think she would believe that anybody in her family are involved in jueteng payola."

Also present at the meeting were Bishop Cesar Punzalan III and several other evangelical leaders, Abante said.

He said the bishops fully supported the President's order for a new all-out war on jueteng.

I DIDN'T/ A6

BISHOPS' BLESSINGS. President Macapagal-Arroyo is prayed over by evangelical bishops after the opening ceremonies of the Metro Manila Franklin Graham Festival of Evangelism at the Crossroad 77 Covenarium in Quezon City. EDWIN BACASMAS

Señeres resigns as NLRC chief

By Jerome Aning

HIS POWERS clipped by Malacañang following rumors of his alleged involvement in a destabilization plot, National Labor Relations Commissions Chair Roy Señeres yesterday said he was quitting his post because he was no longer happy.

"The President is also no longer happy with me and the feeling is mutual. So what for [do I have to remain at my post]?" Señeres said over radio station dzMM's Aksyon Ngayon, which he co-hosts.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Malacañang would issue a statement upon receiving the resignation letter.

Earlier, Señeres announced his decision to resign during the flag ceremony at the NLRC office in Quezon City. The news shocked employees who later said they would petition President Macapagal-Arroyo to retain him.

Señeres said his decision to quit was final and he would formalize it tomorrow in an 11-page letter.

He said he had thought hard about quitting during a retreat last week in Butuan City, where he attended an alumni homecoming. "My whole body rejoiced when I reached this decision. I'm so happy with this decision. I'm not going to turn my back on happiness," he said.

"This is a voluntary act on my part. After all, I've been serving the government for a long time so I think it's about time to go out

SEÑERES/ A4

Governors also on PNP 'jueteng' list

By Philip C. Tubeza and Juliet Labog-Javellana

SEVERAL incumbent local officials are included on the Philippine National Police list of "jueteng" operators and financiers, the chair of the House committee on games and amusement said yesterday.

Rep. Joel Mayo Almario (Lakas, Davao Oriental) said the PNP submitted to Congress its list of suspected illegal gambling operators in the entire country and no congressman was mentioned.

"I can recognize a few names who are now incumbent local government officials," Almario said.

Almario said he recognized some mayors while his colleagues, who also saw the list, recognized the names of some governors.

He said the list also included the names of some gambling lords, allegedly including Pampanga's Bong Pineda, and a certain Sanchez.

Almario said the nine-page list contained the names of suspected gambling financiers and operators from the Ilocos to the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao "as of Dec. 14, 2004."

Chief Supt. Victor Luga, the outgoing director of the PNP Directorate for Plans, submitted the list in February, he said.

Almario said the committee would summon PNP officials to

GOVERNORS/ A6

Oakwood mutineers to return to their units

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

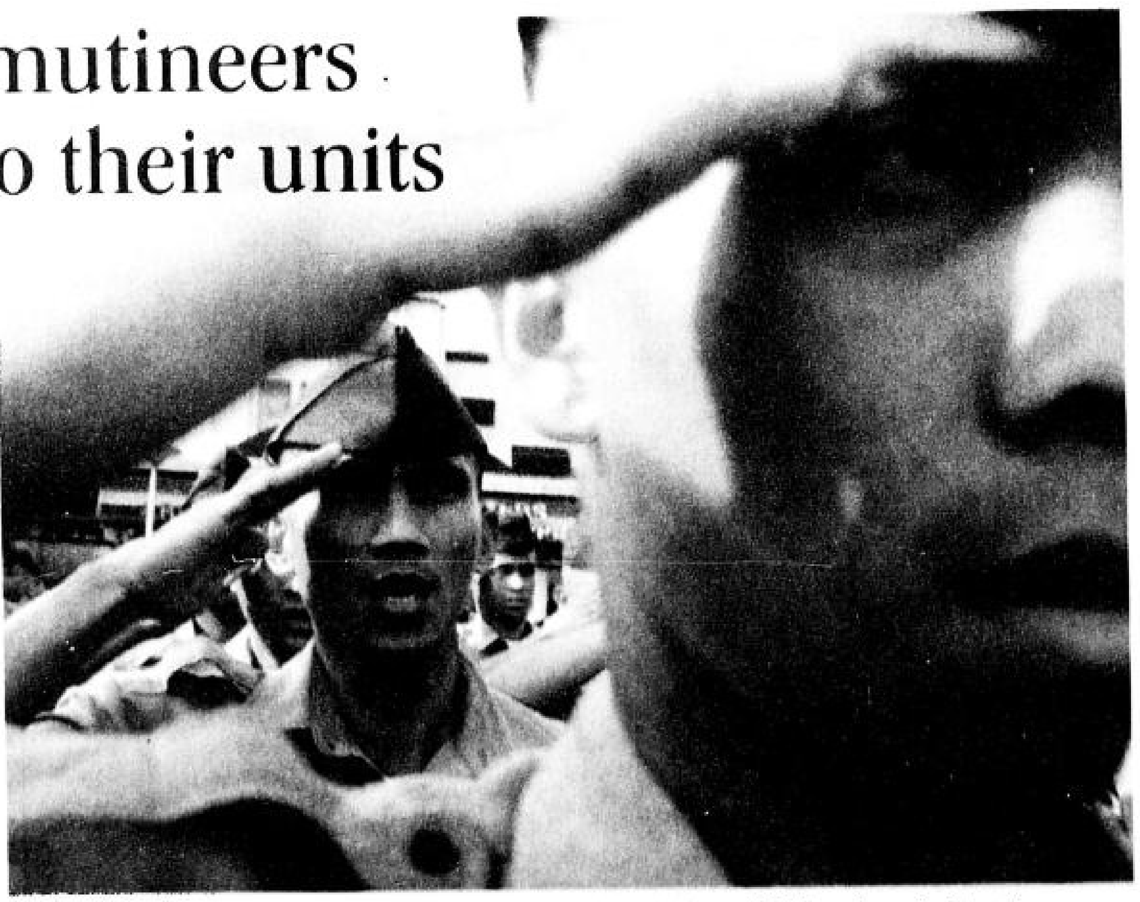
THE SOLDIERS who joined the July 27, 2003, Oakwood mutiny yesterday renewed their pledge of loyalty to the government but they would still be under tight watch just the same.

It will also be "back to basics" for the 181 soldiers. They will undergo a reorientation course in the next two weeks in Camp Aguinaldo.

"They will be observed during the period if they are still fit to serve the AFP and the people," said Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, Armed Forces public information chief. "Upon completion of the training, they will return to their respective mother units for their new assignments."

The Armed Forces warned it would not tolerate any more acts of defiance from the group.

OAKWOOD / A20



FREED after two years in detention, soldiers who joined the Oakwood Mutiny salute the flag after pledging loyalty to the government anew at Camp Aguinaldo. VAL HANDUMON

INFLATION UNCHANGED

RP economy grew 4-5% in first quarter

THE PHILIPPINE economy likely grew 4-5 percent in the first quarter from a year ago, slowing from the 5.4-percent growth in the last quarter of 2004, according to Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri.

Neri yesterday also told reporters that he expected inflation to be around 8.5 percent in the year through May, unchanged from recent months as higher global oil prices continued to jack up the costs of food, transport and electricity.

The government is set to announce on May 30 how the economy performed in the first three months of the year.

Neri reiterated that the first quarter gross domestic product (GDP) was expected to rise a seasonally adjusted 0.5 percent from the previous quarter. The 0.6-percent seasonally adjusted expansion between the fourth and third quarters of 2004 was the slowest since the economy stalled in the last quarter of 2001.

The farm sector, which produces crops such as rice, corn and sugar and contributes around a fifth of GDP, slowed to a crawl in the year through the first quarter due to weather disruptions, according to a government report earlier this month.

The 0.55-percent expansion in the farm sector was slower than the 1.35-percent growth in the year through the fourth quarter of 2004.

A Reuters poll of economists last week showed growth was expected to moderate to 5.0 percent

RP ECONOMY/ A4

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Central and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

COMPILED BY: CYRIL L. BONABENTE, PDI RESEARCH/05/24/05 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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China asks RP to join naval drill

Talks 'frank, friendly, fruitful,' says senior Chinese military official

CHINESE Defense Vice Minister General Xiong Guangkai salutes the colors during ceremonies held at Camp Aguinaldo Monday. VAL HANDUMON

A SENIOR Chinese military official yesterday invited the Philippines to participate in naval exercises and donated engineering equipment during the first annual defense meeting between the two countries — a sign of China's growing influence in Southeast Asia.

Gen. Xiong Guangkai, deputy chief of staff of the People's Liberation Army, also proposed a military exchange program between the two countries during a meeting with Philippine Defense Undersecretary Antonio Santos in Camp Aguinaldo.

Xiong's visit comes amid efforts by China to expand trade, security and transportation ties with countries in Southeast Asia, a region long dominated by the United States but which is increasingly important to the communist giant as a source of raw materials to feed its growing economy.

Xiong said China has invited the Philippines and other countries in the region to participate in a joint naval exercise that would include search and rescue operations.

"The aim of this proposed exercise is to promote our ability, enhance our capabilities to cope with the nontraditional security threats in the region, and hopefully make this region a safer place," he told reporters after a meeting with Philippine Defense Undersecretary Antonio Santos.

Xiong described the meeting as "frank, friendly, fruitful."

China is seeking to protect vital sea lanes in the region to secure a steady supply of oil and raw materials.

Santos said China also agreed to train the first five Filipino soldiers later this year.

The Philippines relies heavily on the United States for its defense needs, including equipment, spare parts and training exercises.

Xiong, who was accompanied by senior and midlevel military officers, formally donated engineering equipment, consisting of bulldozers and graders, to the Armed Forces worth P80 million.

Santos, who headed the Philippine panel in the talks, said the country may send "observers."

"They have offers of participation in maritime security exercises but we have not included this in our program so the vice chief of staff (Vice Admiral Ariston delos Reyes) has said that may be we cannot send a ship but we will participate in another manner," Santos said.

China also agreed to open five military training slots for Filipinos, Santos said. A technical working group would decide the specifics of the training.

Xiong also thanked Manila for backing the one-China policy, saying simply, "We discussed the Taiwan question at the dialogue," without elaborating.

Both sides also agreed to maintain peace in the South China Sea, where they have overlapping claims over the Spratlys, a chain of potentially mineral-rich islets and atolls.

The next annual meeting on the vice ministerial level was scheduled for Beijing in 2006, Xiong said.

Xiong and Santos afterward signed a protocol for the annual defense security dialogue which would be held alternately between the Philippines and China.

The annual dialogue was agreed upon during the visit of Cruz to Beijing last November.

Cruz witnessed the signing yesterday. *Reports by INQUIRER wires and Dona Pazzibugan-Porcalla.*

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16
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Villar richest senator; Jamby, Bong, Jinggoy in top 10; Flavier 'poorest'

VILLAR: Still No. 1

MADRIGAL: No. 4

REVILLA: No. 5

FLAVIER: No. 23

THEY keep a lower profile than their colleagues, but neophyte Senators Jamby Madrigal, Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr., Jinggoy Estrada and Pia Cayetano are among the 10 wealthiest members of the upper chamber.

For the umpteenth time, Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. topped the Senate's millionaires club, while his wife, Las Piñas City Rep. Cynthia Villar, holds that distinction in the House of Representatives.

The figures were taken from the statements of assets and liabilities (SAL) submitted by the lawmakers for 2004.

Senate Pro Tempore Juan Flavier was the poorest senator.

The chamber's three other leaders – Senate President Franklin Drilon, Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan and Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. – did not land in the top 10.

Of the 23 senators, first-termer Madrigal ranked fourth wealthiest. She declared a net worth of P118,182,282 (total assets of P123,063,942 less liabilities of P4,881,660).

The three richest senators were Villar, net worth P620.7 million with no liabilities; Ralph Recto, P241 million also with no liabilities, and Ramon Magsaysay Jr., P153.6 million (assets of P157.1 million less liabilities of P3.5 million).

Villar was also the richest senator in 2003. He and his wife own a real estate empire.

Rounding out the top 10 were Revilla, who was fifth with a net worth of P104.6 million; Juan Ponce Enrile, sixth, P96.2 million; Estrada, seventh, P81.3 million; Cayetano, eighth, P71.9 million; Miriam Defensor-Santiago, ninth, P69.9 million, and Sergio Osmeña III, 10th, P59.6 million.

"Much of what I declared in my SAL came from my earnings in the movies. I've been in the movie industry for quite so long... I believe since 1981. All of those earnings were a product of hard work," Revilla, an actor, told reporters.

Since joining the Senate in July last year, Revilla has not made any movies, but he appears in "Idol ko si Kap," a situation comedy which airs every Saturday on GMA-7.

In his SAL, Enrile declared total assets of P96.2 million, including a house worth P1,000, a detail that puzzled reporters.

"That was my mother's house in Tuguegarao, Cagayan," he said, adding: "I have no other property in my name. All the properties are in the name of the corporation (Jaka group of companies). If they want to check my assets, they can go to the books of the corporation."

The rest of the senators and their net worth were Manuel Roxas III, P50.5 million; Luisa Ejercito, P33.2 million; Edgardo Angara, P29.8 million; Rodolfo Biazon, P24.6 million; Panfilo Lacson, P24.4 million; Richard Gordon, P24 million;

Pangilinan, P14.9 million; Drilon, P13.3 million; Pimentel, P13.1 million; Joker Arroyo, P11 million; Alfredo Lim, P10.5 million; Lito Lapid, P10.1 million, and Flavier, P2 million.

"I'm proud of [my] ranking. I'm not a businessman, that's why," cellar-dweller Flavier chuckled.

He pointed out, however, that nothing had been added to the assets he acquired before joining the government 13 years ago. What increased was their current market value, he said.

"These assets were based on the acquisition value [at the time], that's why there are no major changes. But if you ask me, my assets' market value at present would go as high as P24 million," Flavier joked.

Erap takes case to cyberspace

FORMER President Joseph Estrada, on trial for plundering P4 billion during his brief rule, took his campaign for release into cyberspace yesterday with the launch of his own Web site.

The site gives the former movie star, who is under house, a new outlet to protest his innocence as his trial for corruption drags on more than four years after he was ousted by huge protests.

Visitors to the site (www.erap.ph), which had 3,767 "hits" by mid-afternoon on Monday, can view documentaries and order DVDs giving Estrada's side of the story.

Another section, "Ask Joseph Estrada," offers the chance to ask him questions via email. The e-mails automatically generate the heading "Mr President." "It's to bring out the truth about his trial, the truth about his being deposed and the way this country works," Crispin Remulla, a Congressman and Estrada ally, told Reuters.

"It's also a forum for people to put in their comments so he could get feedback from people so he wouldn't be out of touch." Remulla said Estrada does not have Internet access at his villa north of Manila, but would be able to receive comments through his family and aides.

The 68-year-old could face the death penalty if he is convicted of economic plunder.

But as his trial drags on, many analysts see a deal in the works to pardon him as a way of healing political divisions that continue to undermine the presidency of his successor, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. *Reuters*

Velasco, Delfin exit triggers PNP reshuffle

By Luige A. del Puerto

A MAJOR reshuffle in the Philippine National Police took effect yesterday, with at least nine senior officials leaving and assuming key positions in the police force.

In simple rites at the police headquarters in Camp Crame, police officials also bid farewell to Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco, the former No. 2 man in the PNP, who retired on May 22. Director Robert Delfin, former chief of the Directorate for Intelligence, retired from the service on May 21.

The new appointments are:

- Deputy Director General Ricardo de Leon, a member of PMA class of 1971, acting deputy chief for administration;
- Deputy Director General Oscar Calderon, PMA class 1973, acting deputy chief for operation;
- Deputy Director General Avelino Razon, PMA class 1974, acting chief of staff;
- Director Vidal Querol, PMA class 1973, chief National Capital Region Police Office;
- Director Simeon Dizon, PMA class 1972, chief Directorate for Intelligence;
- Chief Supt. Prospero Noble Jr., head of Police Regional Office 9;
- Chief Supt. Antonio Billones, head of Police Regional Office 11;
- and Chief Supt. Danilo Mangila, head of Police Regional Office 12.

Padre de Pamilya

Emilio Ramos
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Pinapaaral ang 3 kapatid

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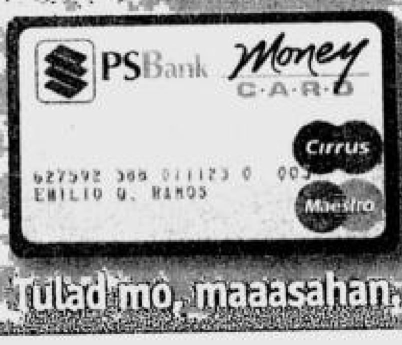

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Señeres resigns as NLRC chief

From page A1

and devote some time to my family," he said.

This time, the NLRC chief said, nobody pressured him to quit, not the President or Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas. He was supposed to remain at his job until his compulsory retirement.

"I can stay (at the NLRC) until 2013 when I turn 65, but I realized I'm no longer happy here. And the President is not happy with me, either," he said.

Señeres said he would continue helping Filipinos, particularly domestic and overseas workers, who were in distress.

Destabilization role

The INQUIRER reported early this month that an emissary of Ms Arroyo had indirectly asked Señeres to quit after he drew her ire for allegedly plotting to destabilize the government during a meeting with then US Ambassador Francis Ricciardone and a military official.

Señeres, one of the few appointees of former President Joseph Estrada who had remained in office in the Arroyo administration, denied the allegation.

But assuming that he was plotting to overthrow the government, Señeres said he would not do so with the help of a foreign government to which he would be beholden.

High treason

"I will never ask for any support from a foreign government because that would be unpatriotic. That is high treason," he told the INQUIRER.

"If there is a group soliciting US support for any destabilizing move, [I'll tell them], even if I do not like this government, I'll ally with it," he said.

According to him, the President's suspicion was unfounded and based mostly on "intrigues" sown by a Cabinet official who thought that Señeres was interested in the official's position.

Señeres confirmed meeting with Ricciardone on Easter Sunday, March 27, but said it was just a regular call on a friend.

NLRC transfer

The NLRC chief also clashed with the President over her plan, which Sto. Tomas backed, to turn over administrative supervision of the commission to the labor department so that the agency's growing backlog of labor cases could be trimmed.

Señeres denounced the move as illegal, saying that the Labor Code would have to first be amended by Congress. He also threatened to bring the matter to court.

He blamed the government for failing to give the NLRC a big enough budget and personnel to cope with the thousands of pending cases.

Labor standards

Ultimately, however, it was also the DOLE's fault there was a huge number of labor cases because it failed to enforce labor standards, he said. Many DOLE inspectors do not do their jobs well, so workers flock to the NLRC to seek redress for grievances, he said.

Señeres said the existence of smuggling in the country also forced many companies to shut down, and the workers who were suddenly jobless to go to the NLRC for help.

One of the few high-ranking national government officials who hail from Mindanao, Señeres served as ambassador to the United Arab Emirates. In June 2000, he gained prominence for coming to the succor of overseas Filipino workers who were victims of injustice, like Sarah Balabagan, John Aquino and Tarhata Akas.

Señeres started his public career as a hearing officer at the Bureau of Labor Relations and became special assistant for labor relations to then Labor Secretary Blas Ople.

He was a compulsory arbitrator and voluntary arbitrator with the ad hoc NLRC before it was transformed into a permanent quasi-judicial agency in 1974.

He became an executive labor arbiter in the commission and eventually its chair, the youngest to occupy the post at the time of his appointment.

Diplomatic career

His diplomatic career began when he was named labor attaché at the Philippine Embassy in Washington, after which he was appointed UAE envoy. He was dean of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations ambassadors in the UAE from 1986 to 1988.

In 1998, Señeres was cited by the London-based World's Who's Who in International Affairs as "a leading diplomat and principal figure in the field of international relations."

He was founding chair of the Advancement of Workers Awareness Regarding Employment (Aware) Foundation, a nongovernment organization specializing in modern pre-departure orientation seminars for OFWs.

He also founded Unmask or the Ugnayan ng mga Mamamayang Ayaw sa Katiwalian, another NGO which aims to expose and fight corruption in the government service.

With reports from Fe Zamora and Christine O. Avendaño

Bureau of Customs
Launching
Run After the Smugglers (RATS)
May 23
ABS CBN

CUSTOMS Commissioner Bert Lina (left) and Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima meet with journalists during the launching of the "Run After The Smugglers" (RATS) program. ERIK ARAZAS

Gov't files smuggling raps ...

From page A1

istered as a customs bonded manufacturing warehouse (CBMW), including its president Arturo Lopez and general manager Ernesto Soriano.

Also accused were Davao Customs District Collector Aniceto Sanchez, chief of the CBMW division Ebenezer Arellano and Customs employee Antonio Michael Plata, among others.

Only diesel fuel

"We hold no one as sacred cows in our campaign," said Customs Commissioner Alberto Lina, referring to the joint program with the finance department called Run After Tax Smugglers (RATS). "We will do what we have to do. This is just the beginning."

As a CBMW, Petroline was authorized to import tax-free diesel fuel and other raw materials for the manufacture of intermediate fuel oil—a product for industrial use resulting from the mixture of bunker fuel, diesel fuel and additives—and to supply fuel to banana boats in Mindanao.

BOC investigation showed, however, that Petroline had been importing only diesel fuel and not the bunker fuel and additives required in the manufacturing process.

The fuel oil was allowed to come in duty-free because it was supposedly loaded on vessels that exported goods—which meant that the fuel would later leave the country and not be used locally.

Lina said Petroline never loaded the fuel onto the banana boats but "probably sold it commercially—without the company paying the proper taxes."

Conspiracy

He said BOC personnel in Davao "conspired to allow Petroline to withdraw fuel from its warehouse under questionable circumstances."

According to Lina, the bureau is also investigating other small and big oil companies.

"We are reviewing all of them. We are reconciling all information. We are reviewing the operations of (oil importers) in Subic and Clark."

RP economy grew 4-5% in first quarter

From page A1

this year, lower than the government target of 5.3 to 6.3 percent.

High oil prices and taxes may also cut into consumer demand, but remittances from overseas Filipino workers may cushion the impact of an increase in inflation, according to economists.

Infra spending

During the 2005 Philippine Infrastructure Conference held yesterday in Makati City, the World Bank warned that the country's long-term economic growth may be jeopardized by the government's inadequate spending for infrastructure development.

Joachim von Amsberg, the World Bank director in the country, said the Philippines should increase its budget for infrastructure to at least 5 percent of its GDP from the average of 3.3 percent it had spent from 1998 to 2002. In comparison, neighboring countries spend on the average 5 percent of their GDP on infrastructure.

"Infrastructure deployment has not kept up with high population growth and rapid urbanization, with serious consequences for the country's competitiveness and in particular for its growth and poverty-reduction targets," Amsberg said.

He noted that in the Global Competitiveness Report for 2003 and 2004, the Philippines ranked the lowest among eight Asian countries in terms of the quality of its infrastructure services.

The Philippines got an average score of 2.3 points for categories that included railroad, port, air, electric and telephone facilities.

Malaysia got 6.1 points; Korea, 5.2; Thailand, 4.9; Indonesia, 3.7; China, 3.5; India, 2.9, and Vietnam, 2.7.

Amsberg said that aside from the government's meager spending for infrastructure, poor Filipinos had limited access to whatever infrastructure facilities were available.

The World Bank official said the Philippines could spare more funds for infrastructure by sustaining recent fiscal reforms.

"Fiscal reforms can restore the credibility and sustainability of infrastructure investments and could lower cost of financing," Amsberg said.

Among the reforms that the World Bank official cited were electricity rate increases to allow power firms to recover their costs, the privatization of water distribution in Metro Manila, the setting up of a special road fund, and allowing private firms to build more infrastructure projects through build-operate-transfer schemes.

Bond float plan

"Determination and consistency in the implementation of existing policies and a few additional measures can bring huge benefits in terms of attracting private investment and breaking infrastructure bottlenecks," Amsberg said.

On the sidelines of the conference, however, Trade Secretary Juan Santos said the National Development Co. (NDC), the government's investment arm, planned to sell bonds and properties this year to raise P8 billion for vital infrastructure projects.

Santos, who also chairs the NDC, told reporters that the firm would float P5 billion worth of peso-denominated bonds and sell P3 billion worth of real estate assets in 2005.

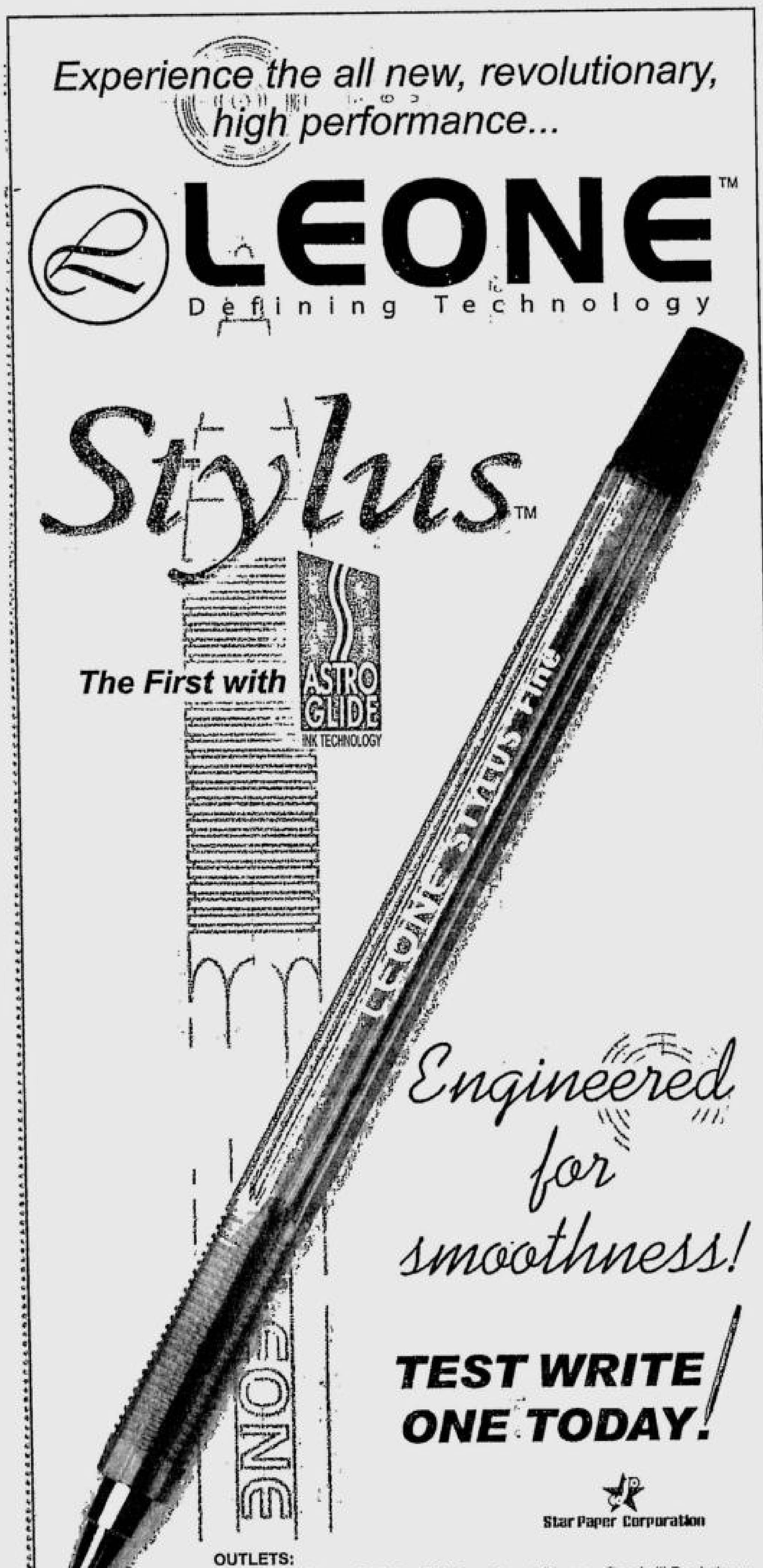
"While we recognize that this is a contingent liability, we would ensure these are in long-term peso-denominated borrowings," he said of the proposed bond float.

Santos said the NDC also planned to tap overseas development assistance funds and to ask the government to allocate an undetermined amount from its privatization proceeds this year for infrastructure projects.

He said a unit of the NDC—Philippine Infrastructure Corp.—needs P100 billion within the next six years to bankroll vital infrastructure projects.

These projects include the construction and rehabilitation of expressways in Luzon and more airports in Mindanao.

According to Santos, the NDC plans to invest in areas where there is no private sector participation. *Reports from Reuters and Michelle V. Remo*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Now, it's the lawyers crying bloody murder

By Norman Bordadora

AFTER journalists, it appears to be open season on lawyers in the Philippines, an international lawyers' group said yesterday.

The Netherlands-based International Association of People's Lawyers (IAPL) expressed alarm over the violence being committed against lawyers, even judges, in the country.

Threat to justice

The IAPL took note of the three lawyers and one law student slain since January this year and the seven lawyers and judges killed in 2004.

The international lawyers' group said the violence being committed against members of the bar affects the integrity and independence of the legal practice in the Philippines.

"These attacks against lawyers and judges... [impact] on the independence and integrity of the practice of law. These attacks violate international principles and threaten... the administration of justice," the IAPL said.

Palace reminded

The IAPL is headed by Hakan Karakus of Turkey, president.

In a statement the group issued yesterday, it reminded President Macapagal-Arroyo of the government's obligation and duty to protect the rights of legal practitioners as mandated by the 8th United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which includes the basic principles on the role of lawyers.

'Adequate protection'

The IAPL said "the adequate protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms to which all persons are entitled requires that all persons have effective access to legal services provided by an independent legal profession.

"Paragraph 18 of the same principles declares that lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of the discharge of their functions," the IAPL said.

3 judges dead

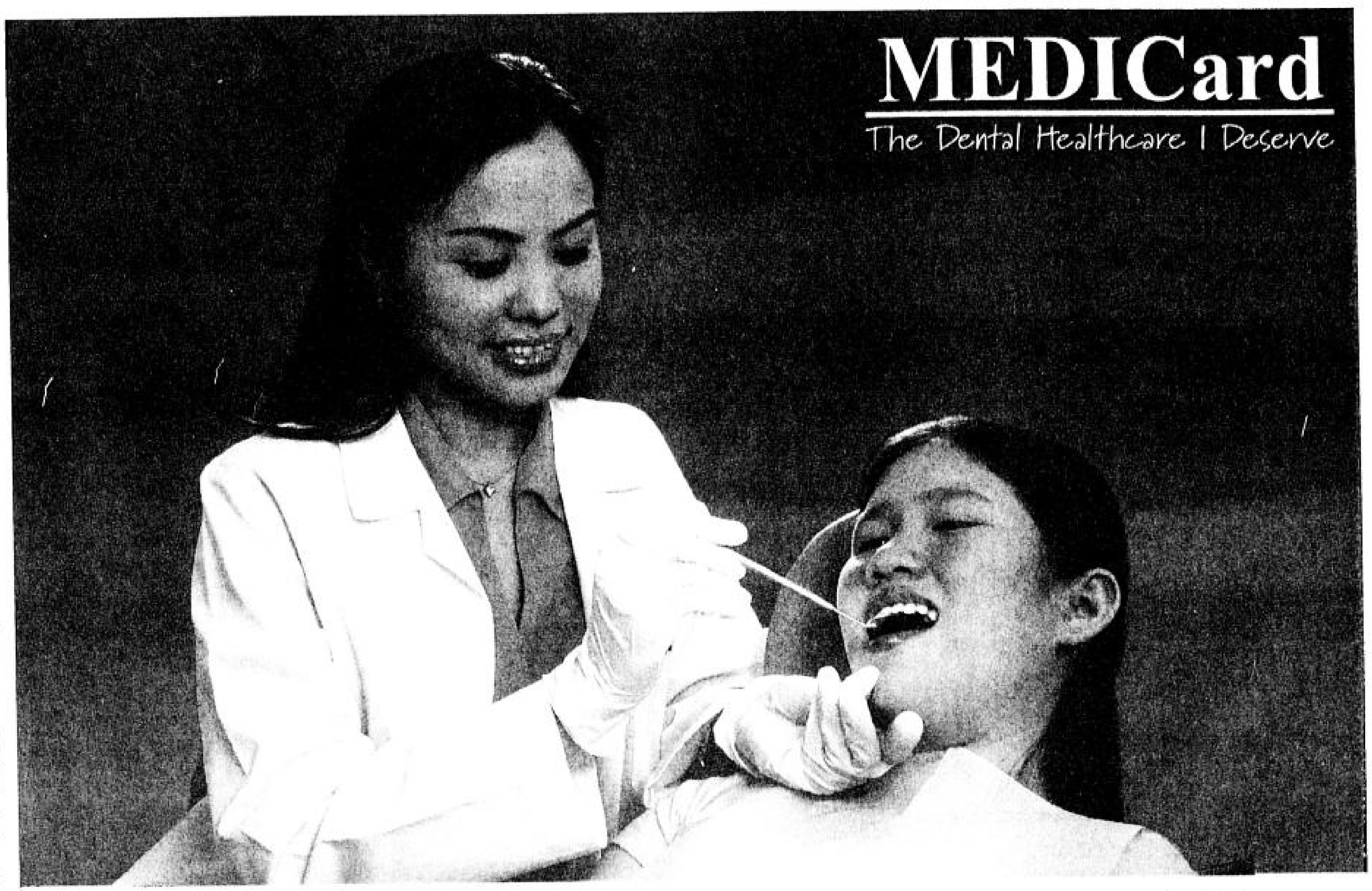
The three lawyers killed this year were Las Piñas City Public Attorney's Office lawyer Teresita Vidamo, in February 2005; human rights lawyer Felidito Dacut, in March 2005, and Ambrosio Matias on May 8. The law student was Matias' son, Leonard, who was slain along with his father.

The seven lawyers who were killed in 2004 included three judges.

Rights lawyer

They were human rights lawyer Juvy Magsino, in February 2004; Arbet Yongco, October 2004; Victoria Mangapit Sturch, April 2004; Edgar Calizo, November 2004; and Regional Trial Court Judges Paterno Tiamson, February 2004; Milnar Lammawin, April 2004, and Voltaire Rosales, June 2004.

On the other hand, since 2004, 19 journalists have been killed throughout the country. Since 1986, 69 journalists have been slain.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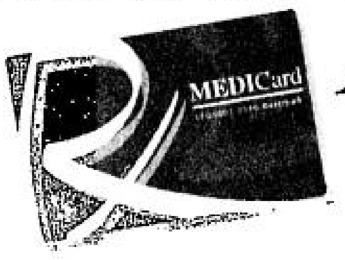

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I didn't get a centavo from 'jueteng'–GMA

From page A1

Abante said the subject of jueteng came up when he proposed that Malacañang create an independent commission to conduct an investigation into the illegal numbers game.

"No one among the evangelical bishops accepts jueteng payola," Abante said he told the President.

He then referred to reports that some Catholic bishops had admitted accepting donations from jueteng operators.

This prompted Ms Arroyo to declare that she also was not on the take, Abante said.

Promoting corruption

In a statement, the Alliance of Baptist Councils commended Ms Arroyo for her announced all-out campaign against jueteng, saying the illegal numbers game "promotes corruption, undermines institutions and its capabilities to properly govern, and ultimately erodes the moral fiber of Philippine society.

"In this regard, we shall earnestly pray for this administration, that it shall stay on this course of action, apprehending those who actively support and gain from jueteng, prosecuting these elements, and delivering upon these elements the appropriate penalties and punishments for these unlawful acts under Philippine laws,'" said the statement.

In a letter he gave Ms Arroyo, Abante said the commission he was proposing should investigate not only members of Congress but also other government officials, past and present, who were allegedly involved in jueteng payola.

Abante suggested that the commission be made up of two representatives each from the religious, academe and business sectors, as well as the media.

Whistle-blowers are gone?

Ms Arroyo made no commitments to his proposal, he said.

As the Department of Justice prepared to open on Wednesday an investigation into the controversy, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said he had received reports that the three jueteng whistle-blowers who had spoken of alleged payoffs to the police and to people close to Malacañang had left the country.

Gonzalez said the reports about the supposed departure of the trio—known by their code names B1, B2 and 01—came from "credible" sources, but he did not identify them.

There was no independent verification of the report.

Background checks

The DOJ has invited Archbishop Oscar Cruz for the initial meeting of its Special Committee Against Jueteng and Illegal Numbers Games.

Gonzalez said the department had started checking into the background of B1 and found that he was someone who had "fallen out of grace with Presidential Assistant Mario Espinosa for absconding with P300,000."

Gonzalez did not say who B1 was but a paper he was holding at a news conference and which was seen by the INQUIRER had the name Avelino "Ave" Riva.

The secretary asked the trio to make a big "sacrifice" for the country by facing the law.

No immunity

"If you are willing to do something good for the country, you must undergo the pain," he said, reacting to criticism that charging the three with involvement in jueteng would discourage more witnesses from coming out.

"We cannot give a blanket exoneration to everybody," Gonzalez said.

"They would still undergo a fact-finding and preliminary investigation before being placed under the witness protection program," he said.

Gonzalez said claims by the whistle-blowers that they had ended their involvement in jueteng did not exculpate them.

Also invited to the hearing Wednesday were Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, Philippine National Police Director General Arturo C. Lomibao and Anti-Money Laundering Council Executive Director Vicente Aquino.

Still waiting for evidence

According to Gonzalez, the DOJ will also be inviting Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson to educate them on the operation of the illegal numbers game.

Asked when the department would invite First Gentleman Mike Arroyo and Rep. Mikey Arroyo, who were alleged to be recipients of jueteng money, Gonzalez said, "at the proper time when there is evidence."

He said the DOJ would not be concentrating on the Arroyos just yet because it would have to first ascertain the veracity of the facts coming in.

Gonzalez said reports he had received indicated that B1, an alleged bagman of Espinosa, had left for an unknown foreign destination, while 01—a certain Boy Tangkad—had gone to the United States.

He said that B2, who supposedly made an unsuccessful bid for mayor in Bicol, also left the country after the jueteng issue broke out.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Ms Arroyo was firm in her decision against legalizing jueteng.

"The President believes that the culture of honest work and not the culture of gambling should be promoted," he said.

He said it would be difficult to impose deadlines on when the jueteng problem would be controlled.

"It's difficult to put a three-month, six-month or one-year deadline, when we know that the problem is much more difficult to lick within a certain period," Bunye said. *With a report from Mary Elaine V. Gonda*

Governors also on PNP 'jueteng' list

From page A1

find out what action they took against those on the list.

He said that when the committee asked regional police directors about the addresses of those on the list, one of them replied that the suspected gambling operators being sought were not "in any manner involved in illegal gambling."

"Nine regional directors responded. While some of them confirmed what was on the list, the others said that the persons supposedly in their area of responsibility came from another region; another said that the suspect was already dead; another said he did not recognize [the suspect]; while another said that the suspected gambling operator was a businessman," Almario said.

Poultry operator

A suspected gambling financier in Lucena City was even described as a "poultry operator," he said.

"I was also dismayed by the list because it did not contain the specific addresses of these persons. Some were even identified only by their aliases," he said.

But based on the regional police directors' response, the committee was able to send out invitations to 109 persons on the list, asking them to attend yesterday's hearing.

However, only four people showed up and they were only representatives of the suspected illegal gambling operators.

Resource persons

Almario clarified that they were invited only as resource persons since the committee was not investigating the jueteng scandal but was deliberating on the illegal numbers game's proposed legalization.

He said he would send out invitations again in the hope that the persons on the list would show up during the committee's hearing next week.

Almario denied that Malacañang had certified as urgent the proposal of Mountain Province Rep. Victor Domiguez, House Bill No. 1656, legalizing jueteng.

Senate hearings

At the Senate, the witnesses apparently are ready but the investigators aren't.

The planned Senate hearing on the proliferation of jueteng and the alleged payoffs given to officials and influential protectors won't start until May 30.

Senators agreed on the date after the committee on games, amusement and sports and the committee on public order and illegal drugs agreed to hold joint hearings.

Initially, Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, the games committee chair, said the hearings had been set for June 1 to give the two panels enough time to send out the invitations.

But Lapid's chief of staff, lawyer Filmer Abrajano, told reporters later that the date was moved to May 30.

Pangasinan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, who had long campaigned against jueteng, will be the first to be asked to testify, Lapid said.

Lapid said that for the first hearing, the two committees would also invite Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, Chair Efraim Genuino of Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., Chair Sergio Valencia of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, and Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, chair of the Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines.

Lapid said the witnesses were being called first because he wanted the issue of whether to legalize jueteng tackled first.

Accusers and accused

He said the accusers and the accused in the raging jueteng payola scandal, who might be named in the first hearing, would be summoned to the next session.

This would include a witness who Archbishop Cruz had said would testify about all that he knew about jueteng and who had already videotaped his testimony.

"That (issue) will also be tackled because Archbishop Cruz will be there to talk about all his complaints. As of now, everything said about [people on the take] is all hearsay. Nobody has [formally] accused anybody. We will call whoever Archbishop Cruz names," Lapid said.

He said alleged jueteng lord Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo and his son, Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo, would be invited if they are mentioned in the course of the hearings.

Unnamed witnesses

"If somebody will talk [about the First Gentleman], if there are witnesses like that one who talked about M1, M2 and JS7, then we will summon them," Lapid said.

A police officer earlier told the INQUIRER that three close relatives of a high government official were raking in millions of pesos every month from jueteng lords. He identified the relatives by their code names M1, M2 and JS7.

Lapid said the witnesses identified by Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and those to be named by Sen. Panfilo Lacson would be invited if the two senators ask the committees to summon them.

Pimentel has listed 24 individuals who should be invited, aside from six witnesses willing to testify about jueteng operations.

Lapid explains delay

Lacson said he had at least eight witnesses, but had seen only two affidavits thus far.

Last week, a confessed jueteng lord and two "bagmen" spoke to the INQUIRER and claimed they were told that part of the jueteng money was being sent to Arroyo and his elder son Mikey.

The Arroyos have vigorously denied the allegation.

The three jueteng men, known by their code names B1, B2 and 01, are also expected to testify at the Senate investigation. *(See banner story.)*

Lapid said he should not be blamed for the delay in the investigation, which was originally set for Wednesday last week. He said Pimentel was to blame.

"I was about to conduct the hearing but he requested for the postponement. You might put the blame on me again," he said.

Pimentel had asked that Lapid be booted out of the investigation for conflict of interest. He said Lapid once served as governor of Pampanga, the alleged "Vatican of jueteng," and had already cleared his friend Pineda of involvement.

SUSAN Tan, an alleged former "lo-teng" operator, is all smiles during yesterday's congressional hearing on the illegal numbers game based on lottery.

REM ZAMORA

Malacañang also clueless on Mike A's whereabouts

From page A1

Even Malacañang and the spokesperson of the President's husband, Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, appeared to be clueless on his whereabouts and when he would be coming home.

Meanwhile, rumors flew that Arroyo had proceeded to San Francisco after leaving Manila for Singapore three days ago.

"We don't know the exact time," replied Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye when asked if the Palace had information about Arroyo's return to the Philippines.

Lawyer Jess Santos, the First Gentleman's spokesperson, told the INQUIRER that he had had no contact with his client over the last three days.

"I don't know where the First Gentleman is right now," Santos said, when asked to confirm whether Arroyo was in the family's home in San Francisco.

Santos said, however, that the First Gentleman would come back "as soon as possible" to face all the "unfounded allegations" linking him and his son, Rep. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo and his brother, Rep. Jose Ignacio Arroyo to jueteng payoffs.

Trip long planned

Bunye twitted critics for assuming that the First Gentleman's trip out of the country was a sign of guilt.

"What is clear is that this had been planned and they just proceeded with their vacation," Bunye said.

He also said Malacañang would pose no objection should the Bureau of Internal Revenue decide to look into Rep. Ignacio Arroyo's assets after a list of members of Congress showed he was among the richest congressmen.

'Jueteng quagmire'

"That's the mandate of the BIR so we leave the matter to the BIR," Bunye said.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero and Akbayan party-list Rep. Risa Hontiveros separately called on the House committee on public order and safety to summon Arroyo to the jueteng inquiry tomorrow to clear his name.

Alleged jueteng lord Bong Pineda and Senior Supt. Pat Hernandez should also be on the list of resource persons, Escudero said.

"You can run, you can hide, but you can't forever dodge the truth," said Escudero, stressing that only by facing the congressional inquiry could Arroyo and the others extricate themselves from this "jueteng quagmire."

Hernandez, a member of Philippine Military Academy Class '91, is now detailed with the PNP comptroller's office at Camp Crame.

Missing links?

Congressional sources claimed that Hernandez and a certain Gener David could be the "missing links" that could prove that some high PNP officials had been receiving jueteng payoffs.

A jueteng bagman told the INQUIRER on May 18 that a ledger showed that as of March, jueteng operators in at least 24 provinces had been giving P19.6 million a month to Camp Crame officials allegedly through David and Hernandez.

Rep. Gerardo Espina (NPC, Biliran) and Rep. Roilo Golez (Lakas, Parañaque), chair and vice chair of the committee on public order and safety, respectively, have yet to issue summons as of press time.

"It will be best if he (Arroyo) will face the issue, and defend himself to erase all doubts. It's unwise for him to keep quiet," said Escudero.

"Come back and take the [jueteng] problem seriously," said Hontiveros, referring to Arroyo.

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Sandigan postpones Pimentel testimony

By Nelson F. Flores

THE SANDIGANBAYAN yesterday postponed the testimony of opposition Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. after two members of the special division hearing the plunder and perjury trial of deposed President Joseph Estrada were absent.

Presiding Justice Teresita de Castro postponed the hearing after Estrada's lawyers, former Justice Secretary Serafin Cuevas and Jose Flaminiano, objected to the substitution by Justice Maria Cristina Cortez-Estrada for the absent Justices Diosdado Peralta and Rodolfo Ponferrada.

The defense lawyers said the substitution by Cortez-Estrada was not allowed under the Supreme Court resolution creating the Sandiganbayan special division.

"We do not want to be a party to the violation of the Supreme Court resolution," Cuevas said.

Cortez-Estrada acquiesced to the opposition of Cuevas and Flaminiano, saying she had been asked by De Castro to substitute for the two justices who were out on other important judicial assignments.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said the defense panel's objection to Cortez-Estrada was part of its scheme to delay the trial. He said there was no basis for its opposition since the prosecution did not object to Cortez-Estrada.

Villa-Ignacio stressed the speedy resolution of the plunder trial would favor the former president.

Another plane crashes

A FOUR-SEATER, single engine Piper Cherokee made a forced landing yesterday afternoon on a sugar cane field in Tanauan, Batangas, the Air Transportation Office (ATO) said.

The aircraft's pilot, Capt. Nick Gitsis, and two unidentified passengers were unhurt, ATO chief Nilo Jatico told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Gitsis is an American national, Jatico said.

Citing initial reports, Jatico said the aircraft was on its way to Manila when it experienced engine trouble forcing the pilot to land in Barangay Natatas, Sitio Balon at around 3:33 p.m.

Jatico said the aircraft is owned by a company called Vivere Isles Leisure, Corp.

Two other crashes involving light aircrafts took place in the last two weeks, resulting in the deaths of their pilots and passengers.

Jatico said that while the crashes were unrelated and were caused by different factors, the ATO would still look into the timetable when the crashes took place. *Nikko Dizon*

New group backs Pacific Plans rehab

By Leila B. Salaverria

A NEW group of educational plan holders has emerged and has called for the rehabilitation of beleaguered Pacific Plans Inc. so that its clients could be assured of receiving their children's tuition even as reforms in the company are being carried out.

Made up mostly of holders of PPI's non-exclusive plans and those who consider themselves members of the "C-D economic classes," the Coordinating Alliance for Reform and Empowerment in the Pre-Need Industry (CARE-Pre-Need) said PPI's collapse would not only deprive plan holders' children of an education, but would bode ill for the industry.

"Our main concern is that our investments in the education of our children should be amply protected," the group said in a position paper. "We are convinced the eventual rehabilitation of PPI is in the best interest of the ordinary plan holders, the company and the other stakeholders in the pre-need industry."

The group also called for "calm, sober and constructive discussion" in place of inflammatory rhetoric that would only muddle the PPI issue.

"Helping PPI get back on its feet is an important step forward in ensuring the viability of the entire pre-need industry. Its offered rehabilitation plan could be a starting point in this painstaking endeavor," CARE said.

The group, however, said that would not be enough.

According to CARE, PPI should open its books to accounting and legal experts in the presence of plan holders' representatives. This would ensure a thorough understanding of the company's situation and contribute to an informed discussion on PPI's rehabilitation plan, it said.

Angie Silvestre, a CARE member and non-exclusive PPI plan holder since 1984, said the group wants PPI to pay their children's tuition through up to graduation.

"There is a contract that they have to honor. We were given tuition support for the first semester of this year, but what about the succeeding semesters? We want that assurance," Silvestre said at a forum at the Manila Hotel yesterday.

CARE member Lito de Luna said the group's members banded together a month ago since they moved in the same circles. But he said they were not distancing themselves from the Parents Enabling Parents (PEP) Coalition, the original group of PPI plan holders, and would be willing to team up with the latter.

Most of CARE's members hold tuition plans for the cheaper schools, De Luna said. On the other hand, most PEP members have plans for the pricier schools like La Salle and Ateneo, he said.

Aside from supporting PPI's rehabilitation, CARE aims to get government assurance the pre-need industry would be well-regulated and protected so that more children would be assured of an education.

It suggested the government instruct agencies like the Social Security System and the Government Service and Insurance System to help the industry out.

"If government can guarantee the profits and viability of the IPPs (independent power producers) or even take over cash-strapped Maynilad Water Services, among others, we see no reason why it cannot extend the same assistance to the pre-need industry upon whose health depends the future of our children and our country as a whole," it said.

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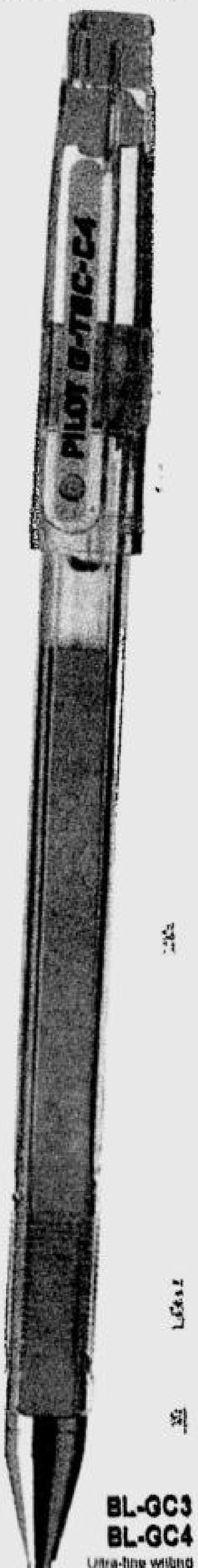

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'We have accepted the truth'

Parents to bring Angela and Angel May home

By Christian V. Esguerra

A TEAM of at least 20 medical experts did everything it could. But in the end, all the doctors agreed separating conjoined twins Angela and Angel May Garganta would only cut further their expected short life span.

The twins' parents have decided to bring the babies home to Sawang Uson, Masbate, and give them "as much comfort and care as possible" as they await the inevitable.

"We have accepted the truth," said the girls' father, Reynaldo Garganta, at a press conference yesterday. "All we want now is to take them home while they're alive and leave the rest to the Lord."

The couple arrived at the decision following a series of consultations with the team of specialists from the Philippine General Hospital headed by pediatric surgeon Dr. Ester Saguil.

The risk of an operation is simply too great for the 25-day-old twins who are conjoined from the chest down to the waist.

Their condition, "thoracopagus," is the most common of conjoined births, according to Dr. Josefina Almonte, head of the PGH pediatrics-surgical ward.

But with the twins sharing a heart and a liver, it is unlikely either one would survive a complicated operation, said pediatric cardiologist Dr. Jonas del Rosario, a member of the medical team.

"Any surgical procedure cannot be conducted until after the babies are more than two months old," said Almonte. "In the past, one or both twins would die after separation, and the rate of survival beyond the age of two was only 20 percent."

Saguil said her team decided against operating, considering that there has so far been no successful separation of twins with a shared heart. "I don't think we're in any position to be the first," she said.

The twins' condition is nothing short of complicated.

Even if their shared heart has two separate parts, each of the girls would be left with only one-and-a half ventricles, Del Rosario said. A normal heart has two ventricles.

They also share a common heart valve when they each should have two, the doctor said. On top of this, they share a vast network of blood vessels.

"When you consider all these, their condition is really very complicated," Del Rosario told reporters. "Separation might mean their death."

The Gargantas are taking the children, their first-born, home to also spare them from further infection in the hospital. They already have a blood infection that requires stringent antibiotic treatment.

"Even if they just reach home alive, we would gladly accept that," said Reynaldo in Filipino.

Saguil said the twins were fit to travel. A "specially prepared" ambulance will take them from the PGH in Manila to the Lucena City port. From there, the family will take a boat to Masbate accompanied by a Red Cross medic.

At home, the babies will receive medicines courtesy of the PGH and the Philippine National Red Cross.

Sen. Richard Gordon, PNRC chair, said the Red Cross would extend a livelihood loan to the family on top of a one-month supply of food and medicines.

REYNALDO Garganta caresses his daughters Angela and Angel May at the Philippine General Hospital. Beside him looking at the conjoined twins is Sen. Richard Gordon. ERIK ARAZAS

Gov't urged to heed UN study and take politics out of PNP

By Luige del Puerto

POLICYMAKERS should seriously consider the suggestions of a United Nations Development Program-funded study, foremost of which is to give the Philippine National Police chief full operational and administrative control over the organization, a retiring police general said yesterday.

Deputy Director General Reynaldo Velasco was also the second police official this year to publicly lament the "politicization" of the PNP, which is caused by the incessant meddling of politicians in police affairs.

When he retired last March, Police Director Lucas Managuelod lambasted the intense politicking in the PNP, a situation he said that left the police with "spoiled brats."

"The vulnerability of the PNP to politicization is inherent in its institutional and operational systems... and weakens the entire PNP's institutional integrity and accountability infrastructure," Velasco said in his retirement speech at Camp Crame, Quezon City.

"Thus, even the selection of officers for certain posts is left in the hands of a few, leaving qualified officers out of the selection process simply because they were not close to the powers-that-be," he said.

Velasco said that despite the law that says there should be "one national police," agencies like the National Police Commission, Civil Service Commission, Department of Interior and Local Government, and People's Law Enforcement Board exercised broad supervisory controls over the PNP.

Add to that the authority of local chief executives over the police, and this has resulted in a "confused police force," Velasco said.

Instead, the PNP chief should be given sole responsibility over the police and the supervisory powers of other agencies over the organization should be removed, Velasco said.

"If he does not deliver, then he should be relieved," he said, adding that it was always assumed that whoever became police chief was qualified for the job.

"He should also be the one hanged (if anything goes wrong)," he said.

Velasco all but said that politicians often went beyond the law when picking local police chiefs.

Under the law, the PNP provides a governor or mayor with a short list of officers from which he could select the next local police chief.

"They (politicians) should not be providing the names to be included in the list," he said. "That is not the way it was written in Republic Act No. 8551 (the law regulating the PNP)."

The fact that the UNDP studied this aspect of the police force meant it had become a serious problem, Velasco said.

He said some politicians tried to influence the selection of officers even at the Senior Officers Placement and Promotions Board, the unit that screens contenders to police posts and prepares the "short list."

But while the SOPPB "considers" the recommendations of politicians, the most qualified officer must be selected.

"That is the only way you can professionalize the police," Velasco said.

The UNDP-funded study said the power of local chief executives over the police was a key reason the cops could not effectively perform their functions.

"The authority being exercised by local government units over the internal operations and decision-making of the PNP creates an environment extremely vulnerable to undue politicization of the police force," it said.

"(It) destroys command responsibility and the administrative management authority of the PNP," it added.

One of the suggestions of the UNDP study was to remove the authority of "external agencies" like local governments, the interior department and Napolcom over the police's internal operations.

Instead of exercising administrative supervision over the police, Napolcom can provide an "independent external review or audit of the PNP's operations and performance," and act as an advisor to the President on the country's peace and order problems, the study said.

It added that the PNP chief should be conferred with "all final administrative authority and accountability over the internal operations of the PNP."

Indon envoy denies report on hostages

THE INDONESIAN Embassy in Manila has denied reports it is not working with the Philippine military in the hunt for three Indonesian seamen kidnapped by suspected al-Qaida-linked militants.

In a letter to AFP Monday the Indonesian charge d'affaires, Sanusi, said he met with Armed Forces of the Philippines chief of staff, General Efren Abu, in the first week of April "seeking his assistance for the release of the three kidnapped Indonesians."

The three Indonesians—Ahmad Resmiyadi, Yamin Labaso and Erikson Hutagaol—were seized in March after their boat was attacked off Malaysia's Sabah region by a group calling itself the Jamiat al-Islamiah of Southern Mindanao.

Sanusi said the Indonesian embassy in Manila was working closely with its consulate in Davao on the southern island of Mindanao.

The embassy had sent four "diplomatic notes" to the Philippine department of foreign affairs, three of which were copied to the commander of the military's southern command in Zamboanga, Lieutenant General Alberto Braganza, he said.

Sanusi was reacting to comments made by Braganza suggesting the Indonesian authorities in the Philippines had done little to help their kidnapped compatriots.

"We have not received any reports from the Indonesian consulate.... They are not coordinating with us, but this does not stop us from our operation to safely recover the hostages," Braganza said Saturday.

The hostages were thought to be held somewhere in the southern Philippine province of Tawi Tawi. Police and military officials now believe they were seized by the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang. *AFP*

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- Edison Villanueva - Staff Nurse at Dekalb Medical Center, Decatur Georgia, U.S.A.

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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, May 24, 2005
8th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Sir 35:1-12
Gospel: Mark 10:28-31

Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, "We have given up everything to follow you." Jesus answered, "Truly, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters, or father or mother, or children, or lands for my sake and for the Gospel, who will not receive his reward. I say to you: even in the midst of persecution he will receive a hundred times as many houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and lands in the present time and in the world to come eternal life. Do pay attention: Many who now are first will be last, and the last, first."

Commentary

The disciples have just watched the thirteenth disciple (perhaps) walk away and they are disturbed-how hard is it to get into the kingdom? Nothing is impossible with God is Jesus' statement-even those with wealth can let go, escape its stranglehold and share with the poor that need it. But Peter is quick to find out what's in it for him and the others and exaggerates mightily saying that they have given up everything for Jesus. (We always think we have been so generous and inflate what we have done for God) and Jesus still assures them (and us) that we will be given one hundred fold, even in persecution-mothers, sisters and brothers, houses, (community of disciples, friends of God), children, lands-missions and a place in the kingdom here welcomed by total strangers who will care for us and life everlasting-tastes of it even here and now. God is not to be outdone by any of our small gestures of giving-we haven't even begun to learn of God or learn to share with those in need.

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SO THE PEOPLE MAY KNOW

The ever increasing spate of persecutions and harassments systematically being committed against us by our religious detractors known for their vaunted political influence in government is a compelling reason for us to avail of this alternative avenue of airing our strongest protest and condemnation against such unabated injustices and unfair practices. With God's help, we hope in the process to still be able to realize a positive outcome in our continuing quest for the elusive "sense of righteousness and fairness" in the midst of a social atmosphere of growing disaffection and discord.

Let it be known to all that we advocate nothing but fair share of justice from government instrumentalities that exercise responsibility in administering the same. Being haled to court is a reality we can easily live with as long as ***"equal protection of law"*** is observed and ***law enforcement is applied to all*** without fear or favor. Unfortunately however, we are at times deprived of legal remedies which on the other hand are easily available to our detractors. Court records will bear us out for instance that Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) is ordinarily granted to our accusers within hours upon filing of request while our own request for the same has not been acted upon several months after it has been filed.

So many instances of unfair treatment have been experienced by us from the very agencies supposedly tasked to protect our guaranteed ***constitutional rights***. However, the recent resolution from the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) comes out to be a fitting climax to the shocking demonstration of ***selective curtailment*** of our supposedly ***inviolable sacred religious freedom*** and ***freedom of speech and of the press***. All programs related to ***Ang Dating Daan*** are now banned from being televised indefinitely so declared by MTRCB! What a way to deprive us of our basic constitutional and human rights!

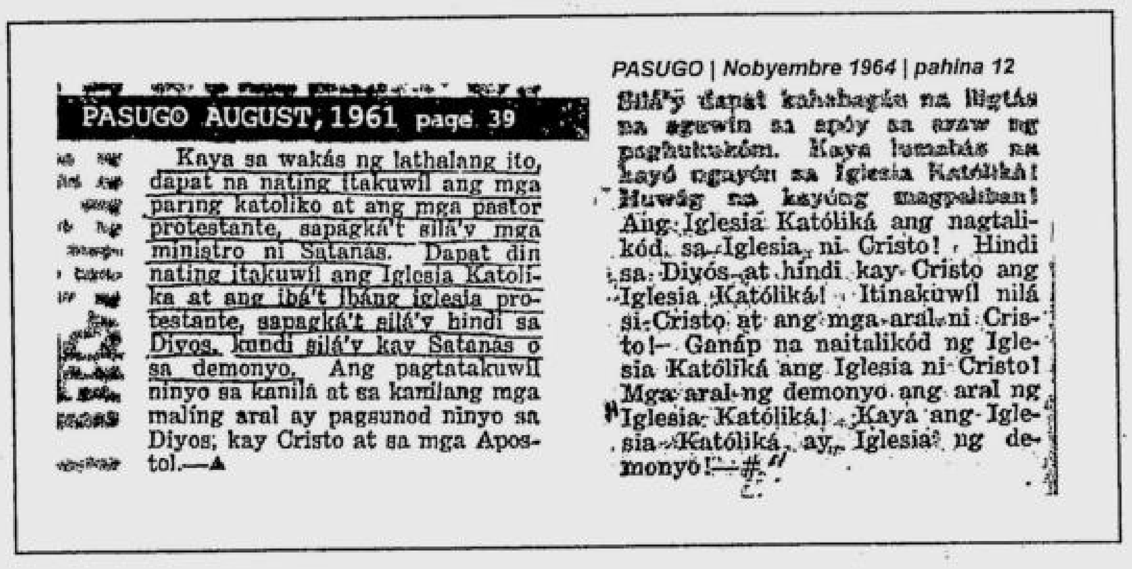
As if to add insult to injury, our tormentors and their cohorts in government backed up by groups of police escorts in an excessive show of force, trooped to our Ortigas Center UNTV studio. Clearly, their act is intended to harass and take the wits out of us despite our earlier compliance to the latest MTRCB ruling.

We wish neither to be alienated from this government nor the government be alienated from the people. What we are hoping for is for the government to govern not for a particular interest group or two but for all ***Filipinos*** so that in the process, the budding seeds of disaffection among many people may be properly addressed and checked even before such disaffection could further develop into a full blown protest.

In like manner, we wish that our detractors and tormentors amidst the darkness of their days would come to see the light of TRUTH, the brightness of our days. We hope that they emerged out of the *unlighted closets of their fortress* and further explore the deeper wisdom of the WORD OF GOD. Holding out to the doctrine of spiritual fairy tale is a desperate effort to preserve total materialism at the expense of spiritual salvation. For how can one be saved by embracing for example their unbiblical and mythical ***"The Angel and the Big Four"*** theory of salvation while propagating the practice of supper (allegedly the "Holy" type) during breakfast time? Indeed, it is this kind of mythical and cultist approach in a different kind of evangelism that eventually led them to invent a blatantly blasphemous doctrine that ***Jesus Christ has not a pinch of divinity***. Moreover, they claim that there is no salvation outside their church so that the Catholics, Muslims, and Protestants among others are hopeless and hell bound according to them. Such inherent spiritual wickedness, corruption and deception characterize the kind of psychological designs being used by them to gain and control adherents albeit temporal. Their uncanny ability to promote the doctrine of LIES in shameless defiance of TRUTH and RIGHTOUSNESS is coupled with the mastery of ***deceptive diversionary tactics***. Such as a devious method is likewise employed by them in a ***desperate*** attempt to evade the onslaught of TRUTH from our end hoping to escape the prospect of self-destructive exposure of spiritual defeat. This explains their *cowardly refusal* to accept our ***religious debate challenge*** invoking lame excuses and reasoning out some mouthful of nonsense. Instead of meeting the challenge to prove their worth, a *wicked method* of ***serialized persecutions*** and ***harassments*** has been implemented to silence us and take the heat off them but they are wrong. We will forever be vigilant in guarding against deceptive religion for the sake of TRUTH and spiritual salvation. With the present situation prevailing, we could only pray for our detractor's enlightenment and wish that they repent.

Finally, we hope that legitimate grievances herein mentioned would merit the attention of those concerned for the greater interest of
TRUTH, JUSTICE, and FAIR PLAY.

WORKERS, OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF
ANG DATING DAAN



PASUGO AUGUST, 1961 page 39

Kaya sa wakás ng lathalang ito, dapat na nating itakuwil ang mga paring katoliko at ang mga pastor protestante, sapagká't silá'y mga ministro ni Satanás. Dapat din nating itakuwil ang Iglesia Katolika at ang ibá't ibáng iglesia protestante, sapagká't silá'y hindi sa Diyos, kundi silá'y kay Satanás o sa demonyo. Ang pagtatakuwil ninyo sa kanilá at sa kanilang mga malíng aral ay pagsunod ninyo sa Diyos; kay Cristo at sa mga Apostol.—▲

PASUGO | Nobyembre 1964 | pahina 12

Silá'y dapat kahabagán na ligtás na agawin sa apóy sa araw ng paghuhukóm. Kaya lumabás na kayó ngayón sa Iglesia Katólika! Huwág na kayóng magpaliban! Ang Iglesia Katólika ang nagtalikód sa Iglesia ni Cristo! Hindi sa Diyós at hindi kay Cristo ang Iglesia Katólika! Itinakuwil nilá si Cristo at ang mga aral ni Cristo!— Ganáp na naitalikód ng Iglesia Katólika ang Iglesia ni Cristo! Mga aral ng demonyo ang aral ng Iglesia Katólika! Kaya ang Iglesia Katólika ay Iglesia ng demonyo!—#

So far, our detractors have, through obvious influence peddling, obtained the following highly unconstitutional orders & directives from government offices.

WHEREFORE, premises considered, the Board thru its Adjudication Committee do hereby indefinitely suspends the respondents from appearing in any programs broadcast or aired over any free and/or cable television.

SO ORDERED.

12 May 2005.

CERTIFIED TRUE XEROX COPY
OF THE ORIGINAL
ATTY. [illegible]
LEGAL OFFICER

MA. CONSOLIZA P. LAGUARDIA
Chairperson

WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, the Board, thru its Adjudication Committee, resolves:

a. to permanently enjoin respondents: ELISEO F. SORIANO; PACIFICO C. ROSAL; JOSELITO MALLARI; WILFREDO SANTIAGO; LUZVIMINDA CRUZ; MARCOS MATARO; and, MEL MAGDARAOG, from addressing, referring and / or alluding to complainant, "IGLESIA NI CRISTO" as "IGLESIA NI MANALO"; and, from uttering such other libelous and defamatory statements in violation of Presidential Decree No. 1986, its implementing rules and regulations and other related laws;

b. to suspend respondents' television programs, specifically, "ITANONG MO KAY SORIANO", "EX MAN", "ANG BIBLIA" and "ANG DATING DAAN", from being broadcasted and / or aired over free and/or cable television for a period of THIRTY (30) DAYS from receipt of this Order; and,

c. to enjoin respondents from directly or indirectly causing the production, broadcast or airing of the aforecited television programs or programs of similar nature or format over free and/or cable television for a period of THIRTY (30) DAYS from receipt of this Order.

SO ORDERED.

Quezon City, 7 May 2005.

PAULINO E. CASES, JR.
Chairman
Adjudication Committee

ZOSIMO G. ALEGRE
Vice-Chairman
Adjudication Committee

FARLEY P. AGUILA
Member
Adjudication Committee

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WHEREFORE, in view of the foregoing, a decision is hereby rendered DECREEING: a) That this Board (MTRCB) has jurisdiction over these cases and b) That the respondents are enjoined from addressing complainant "IGLESIA NI CRISTO" as "IGLESIA NI MANALO" and from using such other descriptions as are not in accordance with law, good customs and contemporary Filipino cultural values.

Respondents are warned that a repetition of similar violations of PD 1986 or any other violation of any provision of the said law will warrant graver sanction, including but not limited to, suspension if not banning, of the specific television programs guilty of such violations.

SO ORDERED.

14 April 2005.

ATTY. ZOSIMO G. ALEGRE
Vice-Chairman
Adjudication Committee

FARLEY P. AGUILA
Member
Adjudication Committee

ATTY. PAULINO E. CASES
Chairman
Adjudication Committee

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Rebel attacks kill 7 Iraqis, 4 US troops

BAGHDAD—Guerrillas seeking to topple Iraq's new government exploded a suicide truck bomb outside a mayor's office and shot a security official on Monday, killing at least seven people in an escalating campaign of violence.

The truck bomb exploded in the town of Tuz Khurmatu south of the oil city of Kirkuk, killing five people and wounding 18.

Among the dead was the brother of a senior official in one of Iraq's main Kurdish parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, police said. The official, Mohammed Mahmoud Jigareti, was wounded in the blast. Both men had been in a car that was entering the mayor's office compound when the bomber struck.

Insurgents also kept up pressure on the US military. Three American soldiers were killed in two separate attacks in the northern city of Mosul on Sunday, the military said, and another US soldier was killed by a bomb blast near Tikrit.

In Baghdad, gunmen killed Wael Rubaie, an official in the operations room in the Ministry of State for National Security, a government statement said. His driver was also killed.

More than a dozen senior government officials have been shot dead in Baghdad in well planned attacks in recent weeks.

US and Iraqi forces detained 285 suspected insurgents "terrorists" in the western Baghdad district of Abu Ghraib after a major search operation, the US military said. It said Operation Squeeze Play was designed to kill or capture guerrillas who have been staging attacks in the capital.

Mainly Sunni insurgents have stepped up violence since a new Shiite-led government was announced in late April, killing more than 500 people in a wave of suicide bombings and ambushes.

Iraqi officials are hoping to give Sunnis a bigger role in politics after they were sidelined in Jan. 30 elections, in a strategy designed to defuse the Sunni-led insurgency. *Reuters*

CHILEAN soldiers look for bodies of missing soldiers in La Cortina, 98 km east of Los Angeles city, about 513 km south of Santiago May 22. Hundreds of searchers piercing the snow with stakes and combing the mountain with dogs on Sunday recovered the bodies of five more of the 45 young soldiers who froze to death in the Andes in the country's worst peacetime military tragedy. REUTERS

Chile Army finds more bodies in Andes tragedy

LOS ANGELES, Chile—Hundreds of searchers piercing the snow with stakes and combing the mountain with dogs on Sunday recovered the bodies of five more of the 45 young soldiers who froze to death in the Andes in the country's worst peacetime military tragedy.

Families began to bury 26 of the mostly teenage victims found so far and the army said it would continue to search for 19 still missing after a regiment of ill-equipped young recruits hiked into a blizzard on Wednesday.

"It's really slow work," Maj. Eugenio Marzal told a local television station that showed lines of soldiers grimly searching the slopes of the Antuco volcano near the Argentine border.

Wind and snow complicated the fifth search day, but the army said it would continue on Monday.

"Today was a difficult step and tomorrow's going to be tougher because we're expecting bad conditions," Army Cmdr. in Chief Juan Cheyre told a press conference.

As the army gave up hope of finding survivors, furious families in the southern city of Los Angeles, where the soldiers were based, raged against officers for ordering the recruits to march off the mountain despite storm warnings.

Cheyre has also blamed the officers on the mountain exercise, dismissed the three top commanders of the 17th Reinforced Regiment and ordered civilian and military investigations into the tragedy.

"What hurts the most is that the death of dozens of youngsters was easily avoidable," La Tercera newspaper said in an editorial. "Those in charge of the regiment did not heed the weather warning and walked into a fatal trap."

President Ricardo Lagos declared three days of national mourning and attended a memorial for 13 of the dead in flag-draped coffins at the army base in Los Angeles.

Most of the victims are teenage recruits from poor families, who enlisted just a month ago and whose regiment went on a mountain training exercise without proper gear during an early-winter storm that blinded and disoriented the group. *Reuters*

China vaccinating 3 million birds in new bird flu alarm

BEIJING—China on Monday was immersed in the Herculean task of vaccinating three million birds, while state media urged people not to panic over the first confirmed case of bird flu since last year.

The large-scale vaccination effort was under way in the western province of Qinghai, two days after the ministry of agriculture announced the deaths of several migratory birds there were caused by avian flu.

"People do not need to panic and should be confident that the new cases will be brought under control as effective measures have been taken by the government," Cui Shangjin, a bird flu specialist, told the China Daily paper.

The dead birds—now confirmed as carriers of the deadly H5N1 strain—were found earlier this month on the edges of Lake Qinghai, the nation's largest saltwater lake, where migratory birds are a major tourist attraction.

Domesticated birds in the area near the lake were vaccinated first, followed by poultry raised near the migratory route of the birds, according to the China Daily.

From these priority areas, vaccinations would spread to all other parts of Qinghai, the paper reported. The entire province will have been covered in about two days' time, it said.

So far, there have been no reports of the disease spreading to humans in China, but the state-run Xinhua news agency indicated authorities were not taking any chances.

Bird Island, a 0.27-sq.-km sanctuary in the middle of Qinghai Lake, was sealed off and health officials had established two inspection and quarantine stations on the road to the island.

Worryingly for China's health bureaucracy, the island is a major interface for contact between humans and birds as large numbers of tourists go there every year to watch its estimated 100,000 swans, cranes and gulls.

Officials from the agriculture ministry said some of the migratory birds found dead in Qinghai were believed to have arrived from Southeast Asia, Xinhua said.

The H5N1 strain of bird flu has been discovered in eight countries since late 2003, including Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. *AFP*

Kyrgyzstan forces Uzbek refugees to return

KARA DARYA, Kyrgyzstan—Kyrgyzstan has forced scores of refugees who fled Uzbekistan after it exploded in unrest to return despite fears they could face cruel treatment, a Kyrgyz official said Monday, as other refugees vowed to go home voluntarily to demand their government's ouster.

"We have nothing to lose," said Khasan Shakirov, surrounded by several dozen other Uzbek refugees at their tent camp near the border town of Kara Darya. "We only have our lives, and we will sacrifice them for freedom."

Shakirov and many other refugees in the camp said they would march on the Uzbek capital, Tashkent, to push for the ouster of President Islam Karimov, whom they accuse of ordering troops to fire at demonstrators in the eastern city of Andijan on March 13.

Karimov blamed Islamic rebels for the unrest and denied that troops had fired on civilians.

He has rejected opposition and rights activists' claims that more than 700 were killed in the violence, and stonewalled Western calls for an international investigation. The government said 169 were killed in Andijan.

About 500 refugees who settled in a tent camp in Kyrgyzstan last week wrote a collective letter to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, begging for protection amid fears that the Kyrgyz authorities would cave in to Uzbek pressure and expel them. *AP*

Laura Bush jostled, heckled in visit to Jerusalem shrine

JERUSALEM—Protesters jostled and harangued US first lady Laura Bush on Sunday when she visited a Jerusalem shrine at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"How dare you come in here! Why your husband kill Muslims?"

one protester shouted at the first lady as Israeli police and US Secret Service agents formed a tight cordon around her to keep people back. For Bush, on a Middle East goodwill tour, it was a rare close encounter with hostile demonstrators.

A small crowd of people pressed in on Bush as she entered the Dome of the Rock mosque in Jerusalem's walled Old City. One worshipper cried out as she entered: "None of you belong in here."

Bush, who made an appeal for peace later, did not respond to him or to an old woman inside the mosque who shouted "Koran, Koran" at her in Arabic.

Bush, dressed in a black pantsuit, with black headscarf donned in religious respect and held tightly on her head, exited with police linking arms around her.

She began a Middle East trip Friday acknowledging that the US image in the Muslim world had been badly damaged by a prisoner abuse scandal and a magazine report, since retracted, that US interrogators desecrated the Koran.

Shortly before visiting the mosque, Bush appeared at the adjacent ancient Western Wall and was confronted by dozens of nationalist Jews demanding Washington free convicted Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard. They shouted and waved placards.

Bush inserted a small handwritten note in a cleft of the wall and paused there for about 60 seconds before returning to her heavily guarded motorcade for the short trip to the mosque.

The disturbances during her trip to the Jerusalem holy site showed "what an emotional place this is as we go from each one of these very, very holy spots to the next," Bush said later during a stop in the West Bank oasis town of Jericho. *Reuters*

US first lady Laura Bush (second, left) being shown the springs by Benedictine Brother Olivier (left) inside the Crusaders Church of Abu Ghosh near Jerusalem May 23. REUTERS

8 Japan firms linked to bid-rigging

TOKYO—Japanese authorities launched an investigation Monday into allegations of bid-rigging for public bridge construction projects after an antimonopoly watchdog filed criminal complaints against eight major companies.

The Fair Trade Commission submitted complaints to Tokyo prosecutors against Yokogawa Bridge Corp., JFE Engineering Inc., Kawada Industries Inc., Ishikawajima-Harima Heavy Industries Co., Miyaji Iron Works Co., TTK Corp. Takadakiko Co. and Kurimoto Ltd., the commission said on its website.

About 30 prosecutors were seen on public broadcaster NHK raiding the offices of Yokogawa Bridge in Tokyo on Monday afternoon.

Prosecutors were searching more than 100 locations related to 47 companies in total, Kyodo News agency said.

Yokogawa acknowledged it had been informed of the criminal complaint. *AP*

Soaring rents threaten to scuttle Dubai's economic miracle

By Richard Dean

DUBAI—Miriam's landlord has given her an ultimatum—pay up or get out of your suburban Dubai villa.

Miriam received an annual rent bill of 90,000 dirhams ($24,500), up almost 40 percent from 65,000 dirhams her family has paid for the past seven years for the three-bedroom house.

"We will manage to pay it, but a lot of our neighbors can't and are moving out," said Miriam, one of the hundreds of thousands of expatriates that account for 80 percent of the population of the Gulf Arab emirate.

Her plight is mirrored across Dubai which lures large numbers of new expatriates to fuel its break-neck development, leaving everything from luxury beach villas to pokey downtown studios in short supply.

"It is certainly an issue," said Elaine Jones, chief executive of real estate consultancy Asteco. She said the growth of Dubai's population exceeded even the most bullish expectations in 2004, after growing 7 percent in 2003 to 1.2 million.

One Dubai-based firm said its office rent was up 40 percent.

Dubai is one of seven emirates in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates. Dubai's ruling al-Maktoum family is spearheading an ambitious investment program with real estate, trade and tourism the main drivers.

Foreigners are lured by tax free and well-paid jobs in the bustling city known for its vibrant nightlife and relatively liberal atmosphere in a conservative Muslim region.

Economists warn that rising inflation may dent Dubai's drive to diversify in order to compensate for dwindling oil reserves.

"The most fundamental question is could Dubai price itself out of being a business hub?" asked Daniel Hanna, an economist with Standard Chartered in Dubai.

The bank put inflation at 8 percent in Dubai last year, with rent the main factor. Prices have also risen for basic goods and services including food, schooling and health care.

The official inflation figure is around 3 percent.

UAE nationals benefit from subsidized housing, as well as free schooling and health care.

Recruitment consultancy GulfTalent said in a survey that rent in the UAE rose 26 percent in a year while the average salary increase was 1.5 percent.

It predicted relocations from Dubai to cheaper emirates and "an increased turnover in the job market." Nine percent of 500 people surveyed said they planned to leave the country due to the high cost of living, it added.

Most of Dubai's consumer goods are imported, and a dirham weakened by its peg to the US dollar has driven up their cost.

"Prices of food and non-food items have risen, on average, 10 to 15 percent over the past two years," said Marwan Al Thani, manager of major retailer Union Coop. "It is hurting our customers on lower incomes." *Reuters*

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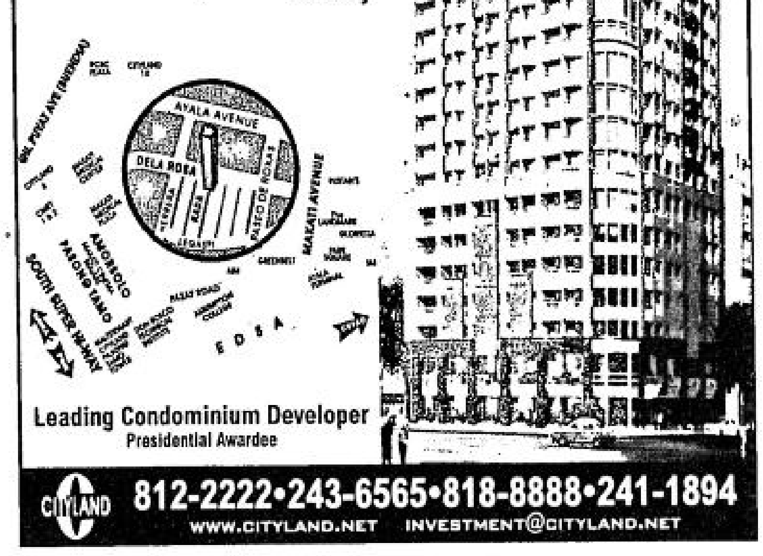

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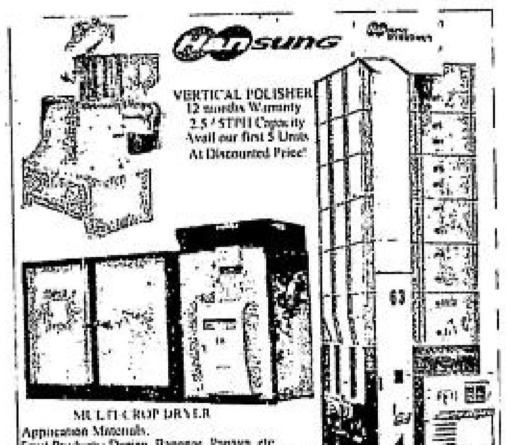

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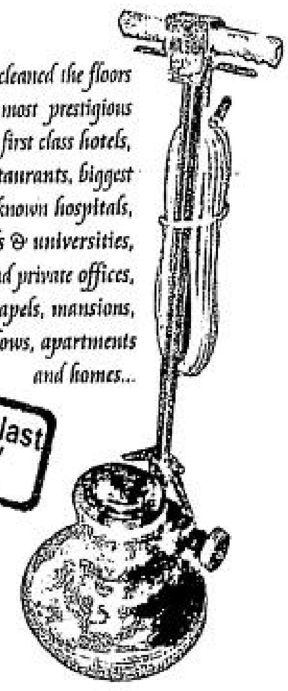

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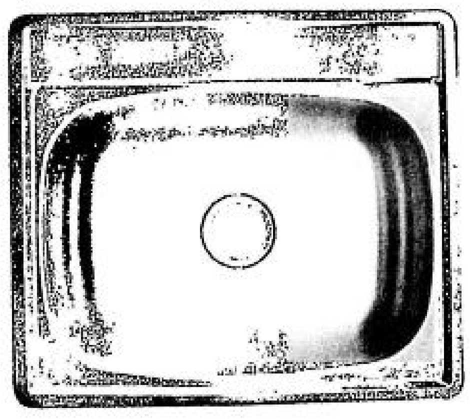
THE TAGAYTAY GRASSLAND COMPANY (Developer) and GREEN SQAURE PROPERTIES CORPORATION (Owner) by virtue of the Joint Venture Agreement has filed with this board a sworn registration for the sale of subdivision lots at CANYON WOODS RESIDENTIAL RESORT PHASE IV-A-1 located at Diokno Highway, Brgy. San Gregorio, Laurel, Batangas specifically described as Lot Nos. 43,44,45,46,49,50,51,52, Block 2, Psd-04-022140. The Project is under PD 957. The subdivision plan is already approved by the Land Management Sector (LMS) dated 8 June 2004.

All Papers relative thereto shall upon request and payment of processing fee is available for inspection during business hours by any person having legal interest thereon.

Absent legal impediment, the above-cited project is deemed registered and a certificate in evidence thereof shall forthwith be issued after ten (10) days from last day of publication.

Quezon City, Metro Manila. 10 may 2005

(Sgd.) BELEN G. CENIZA
Director



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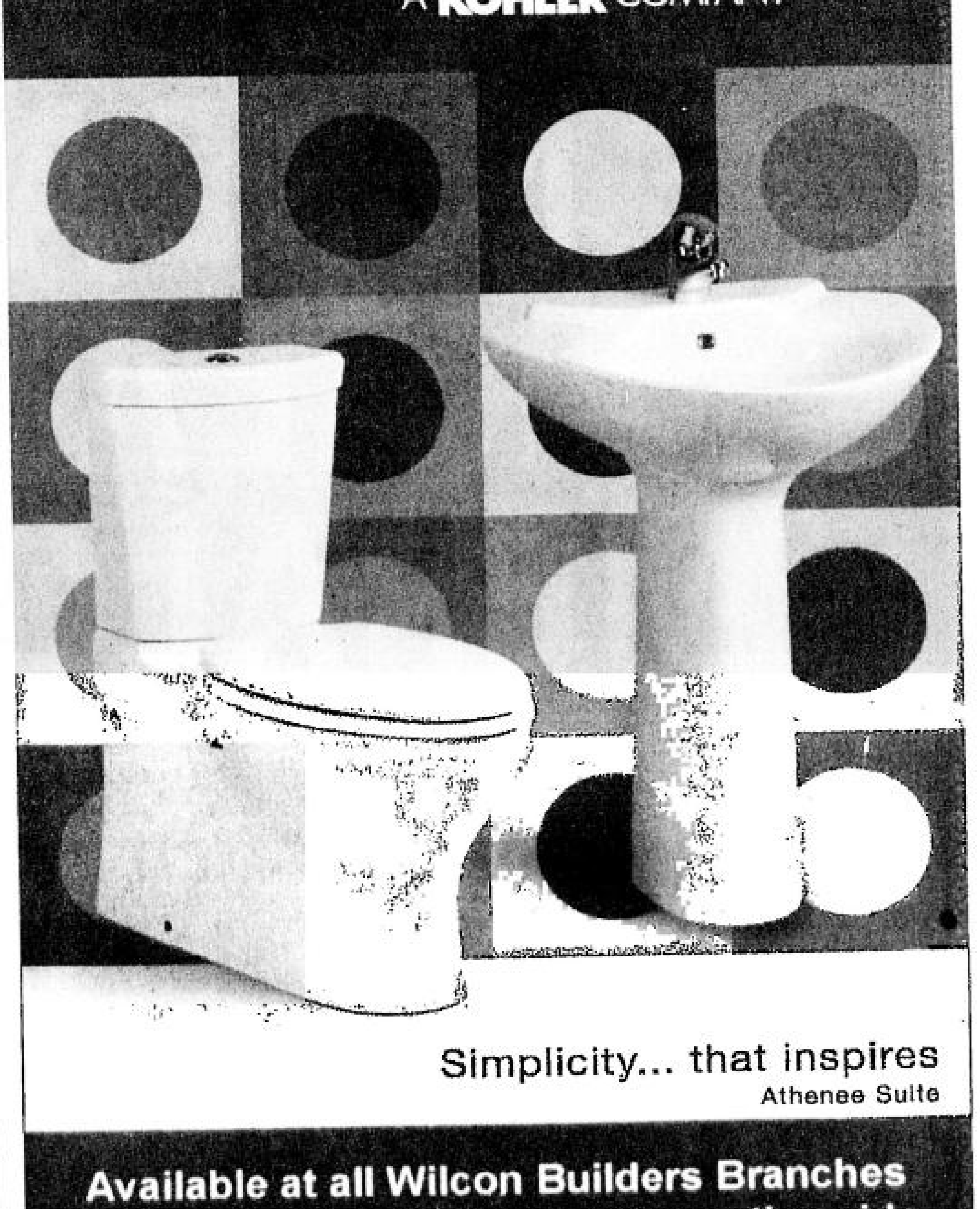

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Schroeder calls for early general poll after party's crushing defeat

GERMAN Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder briefing the media in Berlin May 22. Voters in Germany's most populous state ejected Schroeder's Social Democrats from power Sunday after 39 years of domination, projections showed, prompting the party's leader Franz Muentefering to call for national elections to be brought forward to later this year. AP

BERLIN—German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder called for a general election to be moved forward to late this year after his Social Democrats suffered a devastating defeat in a key state election on Sunday.

His Social Democratic Party (SPD) lost control of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's most populous state where it had ruled for 39 years.

The defeat was the latest in a series of state election defeats for Schroeder's party that have sapped his authority. In 1999, the SPD governed in 11 of Germany's 16 states but is now in charge of only five.

In North Rhine-Westphalia the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) won about 45 percent of the votes, with the SPD trailing behind with 37.2 percent, initial results from the electoral commission showed.

Schroeder said the "bitter defeat" in North Rhine-Westphalia "throws into question the political basis for the continuation of our work" at a time when Germany was in the process of wide-ranging reforms.

He said he wanted to hold a general election "as quickly as possible, realistically in autumn this year," one year ahead of the scheduled date of September 2006.

The Bundestag lower house of parliament will have to vote on the proposal.

North Rhine-Westphalia, a region of 18 million people and the industrial heartland of Germany, was the last remaining state governed by a coalition of Social Democrats and Greens, the so-called red-green coalition, mirroring the federal ruling coalition in Berlin.

Christian Democrat leader Angela Merkel, who is likely to challenge Schroeder in the general election in a bid to become Germany's first woman leader, hailed a "sensational result."

"The voters... have shown hope in us and in the future state leader Juergen Ruettgers because the problems are so great and they want us to shape a policy that will bring down unemployment," Merkel said.

She welcomed the possibility of an early election, saying: "Every day without the red-green coalition will be a good day for Germany."

Ruettgers, the CDU's lead candidate in the state, had capitalized on the high unemployment rate in a region where 1.1 million people are out of work, roughly one fifth of the national total.

A series of social security and labor market reforms introduced by Schroeder's government have proved deeply unpopular with the SPD's traditional working-class voters.

That was reflected in the party's worst state election result in North Rhine-Westphalia for 51 years.

The CDU's likely coalition partner, the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP), won 6.2 percent with the Greens also scoring 6.2 percent.

Schroeder's call for an early general election came after a result that leaves him politically weakened.

His ruling coalition only has a narrow four-seat majority in the Bundestag lower house of parliament and the rout in North Rhine-Westphalia increases the possibility that the left wing of his party will oppose the introduction of further controversial reforms. *AFP*

BUDDHA BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

Indian Buddhist monks chant as they take part in prayers at the Maha Bod Society in Bangalore May 23. Special prayers are being held across the wo to celebrate the 2,549th birth anniversary of Lord Buddha also known as Buddha Jayanti, which is one of Buddhism's most important festivals. Budd was born 560 BC and died at the age of 80 in 480 B.C.

Aussie soldiers want to quit

SYDNEY—Almost one in three Australian soldiers want to quit the armed forces because of poor pay, long periods spent away from home and better career prospects in the civilian sector, a report said Monday.

Citing a confidential defense force report, The Australian newspaper said that 32 percent of army personnel were considering quitting the force, with many saying they don't have the resources or equipment to do their jobs properly.

Those in the navy nominate long periods spent at sea as the main reason for their dissatisfaction, the highest out of the three branches of the military with 37 percent of sailors saying they were thinking of quitting, it said.

Some 24 percent of air force personnel were also considering leaving, according to the survey of the 52,000-strong defense force.

The 2004 Defense Attitude Survey canvassed 8,000 military and civilian personnel and is prepared annually for the military's top managers.

"Among the most influential reasons for leaving... was having little reward for overtime, having insufficient personnel in units to do the job and a lack of confidence in the senior defense leadership," the newspaper quoted the report as saying.

More than half of army personnel—52 percent—said the army did not have the resources to do its job. *AFP*

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EU charter faces rejection as French campaign nears end

PARIS—France entered a frenetic last week of campaigning Sunday ahead of next weekend's referendum on the EU's constitutional treaty, with polls continuing to point to a stunning defeat for President Jacques Chirac and other supporters of the text.

Two new opinion polls Sunday gave the "no" camp 52 percent against 48 percent for supporters of the treaty, bringing to seven the number of surveys in the last week to predict a victory for the opposition. None has found for the "yes" camp.

With the odds shortening for a major electoral upheaval on May 29, both sides were geared for an intensive week of rallies and media appearances in order to win over wavering voters—estimated at between a fifth and a third of the public—and ensure a high turnout by the faithful.

Chirac's office announced that the president will make another personal intervention during the days ahead, though it did not specify when or in what form.

The campaign for the referendum has turned into one of the most hard-fought political battles of recent years in France, with both camps sensing that it is a moment to define the country's identity and relationship with the rest of the world.

While supporters of the European Union constitution say it is a chance to entrench French influence in a bloc that now encompasses the countries of the former Soviet east, for opponents it is a sell-out to "liberal" economic forces that spells the end of France's generous social model.

The arguments have dominated public life for weeks, with many people acquiring an in-depth knowledge of the constitution's four sections and 448 articles.

Pro- and anti posters plaster city walls, newspapers print daily commentaries on key issues, radio talk shows feature angry rows between the two sides, while editions of the constitution and books of explanatory notes dominate the best-seller lists.

The constitution was thrashed out over four years by a committee headed by former French president Valery Giscard d'Estaing, and is meant to simplify decision-making in a body that will contain 27 members. When France helped launch the predecessor European Economic Community in 1957, there were six. *AFP*

India cinemas showing 'offensive' film bombed

NEW DELHI—At least one person died and dozens were injured on Sunday night when two bombs ripped through two cinemas in New Delhi showing a film considered offensive by some Sikhs, police and hospital officials said.

Other movie theaters, packed with weekend crowds, were evacuated across the city and police, rail stations and airports put on high alert, but officials urged people not to panic.

India's cabinet, led by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, the first Sikh prime minister, also discussed how to respond to the attacks during an already scheduled meeting on Sunday marking the government's first anniversary. There was no immediate comment.

"Suddenly, there was a blast and smoke filled the place," survivor Ramesh Sharma said. "I lost consciousness and when I came back, I was in hospital," he added, showing his wristwatch which stopped almost exactly at 8:30 p.m., when one of the explosions hit the Liberty cinema.

His sons suffered minor injuries. His wife was taken to a different hospital and her condition was not known.

The Liberty and Satyam theatres were showing a film,called "Jo Bole So Nihal," the title of which is the first part of a Sikh religious and battle cry which translates as "Blessed is the one who says God is eternal!"

The Hindi language film centers around a Sikh policeman, Nihal Singh, who is hoodwinked by a criminal and goes on a global hunt to nab him.

Some Sikhs had taken offense at the title and to some scenes which showed characters entering Sikh temples without removing their shoes or covering their heads—considered sacrilege.

Following the outcry, the film, released this month, was withdrawn from theaters across the northern state of Punjab, the Sikh heartland.

In 1984, troops stormed the holy seat of Sikhism, the Golden Temple in the Punjabi city of Amritsar, to flush out separatists fighting for their own homeland, killing scores and severely damaging the structure.

Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who ordered the operation, was gunned down four months later by two Sikh bodyguards, triggering a wave of reprisals in which thousands of Sikhs were killed in some of India's worst communal bloodshed.

A special inquiry into the violence recently handed its report to Singh's government, but its findings have not been publicly released.

Some newspapers said the inquiry had recommended reopening cases against members of the then-ruling Congress party, which now leads the federal coalition.

Sikhism, born in India in the 16th century, has about 25 million devotees around the world, making it the fifth-largest religion.

The Sikh separatist movement has now all but disappeared. *Reuters*

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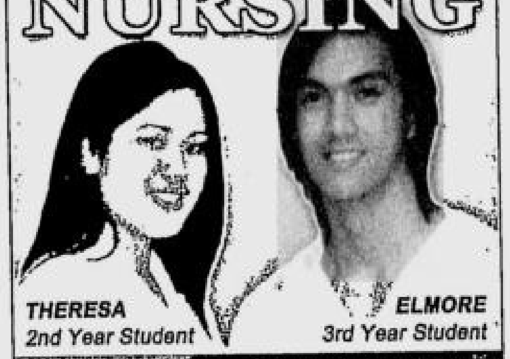

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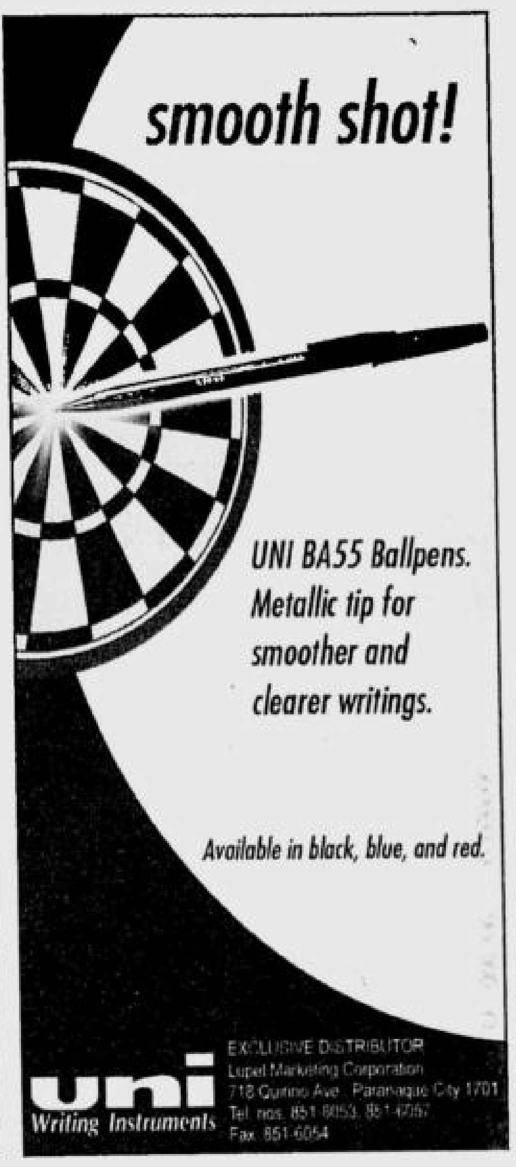
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EDITORIALS

Culture and corruption

THE CULTURE Summit organized by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) is playing to a packed audience of cultural workers at the Manila Pavilion, but with hardly any fanfare or even interest among the public and the media. The surprise is that the media are pretty much in the consciousness of the organizers, who decided on its theme, "The Power of Arts and Media Education in Breaking the Cycle of Corruption and Poverty."

How the media figure in the cultural equation is something for metaphysics to unravel. In fact, the summit seems too amorphous with its concerns—corruption, poverty, pollution and violence—as to become too ambitious and messianic and thus prone to lack of focus, distracted attention and dissipated efforts.

Definitely media's partnership with culture and the arts in raising awareness about corruption and the need to combat it is not debatable. Nobody would argue against the need for a war on corruption. In fact, the NCCA is perhaps the first government agency to come up with a summit as a response to the agenda of President Macapagal-Arroyo to stem corruption. For this, credit should go to new NCCA Chair Ambeth Ocampo and Executive Director Cecile Guidote-Alvarez.

But artists and cultural workers have reason to be wary about any campaign against corruption led and waged by the government which, after all, is the playground of the corrupt. This is not to say that the government is totally corrupt. But if the President and her men want to stamp out corruption, their wish is their command. The solution is in their hands because they—or at least some of them—are part of the problem.

To be sure, in their preoccupation with the expressive and the beautiful, artists and cultural workers participate in the battle against corruption. Artists provide visions of beauty and a purer world; they limn an idealistic landscape and a purer environment that all people could aspire to. In comprehending the reaches of that beautiful vision painted by the artist, people would thus be emboldened to fight anything that would sully or pollute it. The artist is the enemy of the corruptor whether or not fighting corruption is part of the agenda of a sitting president.

Therefore, for artists and cultural workers to take on the agenda of the President to combat corruption may risk coopting the same people who fight corruption through their pen, brush, kinesis, or expressive instrument.

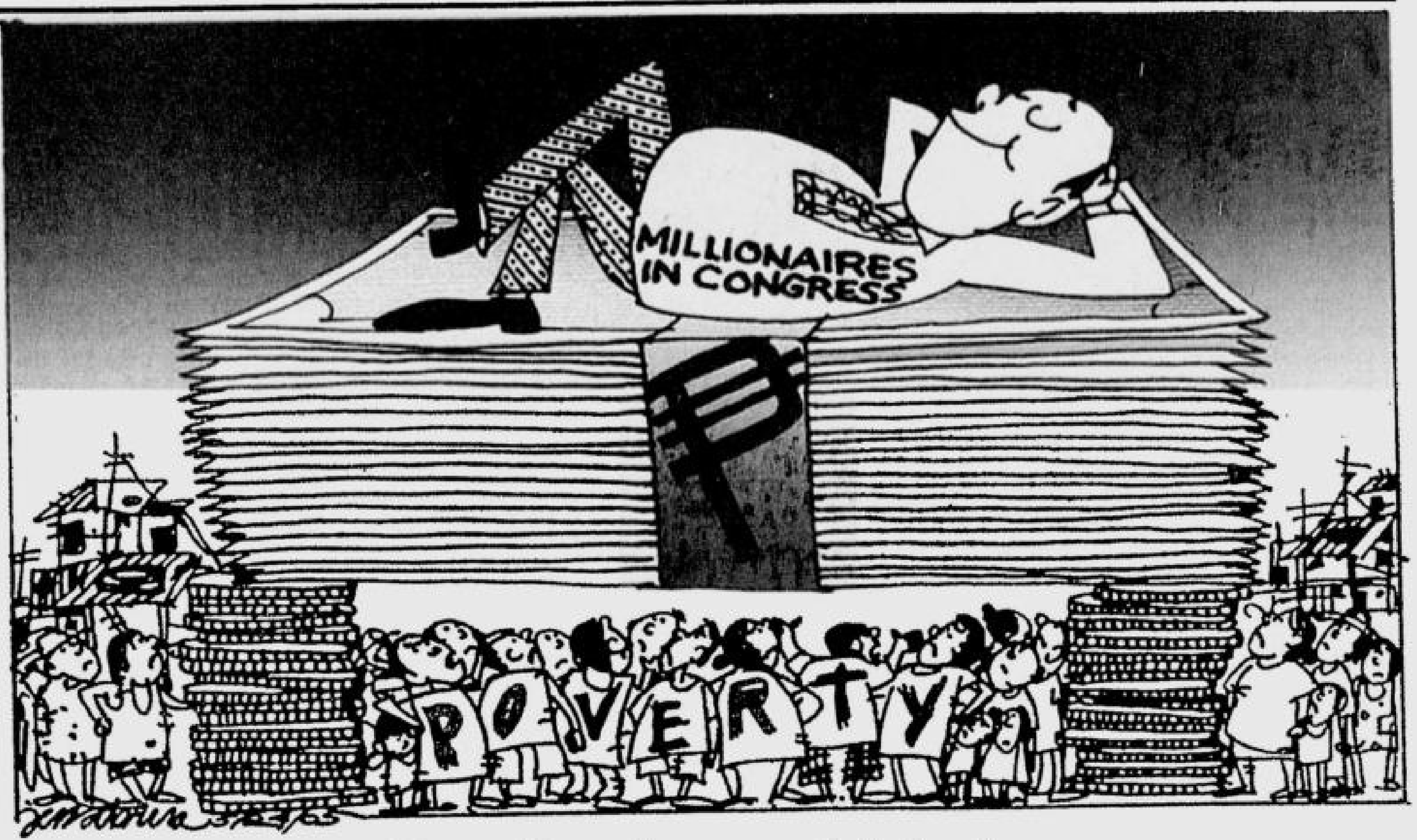
The danger is rife for the NCCA, which is unique among government agencies for having volunteers and private-sector participants. It is made up of 22 national committees covering the arts, cultural education, cultural communities and cultural heritage. The committees are mainly made up of volunteers and leaders of different art and culture sectors. They are understandably wary about any government attempt to engage the arts and culture regime in the fight against graft. They fear co-optation, and the fear is legitimate.

Presidential sincerity

IN THE END the success of the war on corruption depends on the sincerity of the Arroyo administration. The arts and culture regime can only do so much in raising awareness about the corruption. If the administration doesn't deliver, then not all the summitry in the world can stamp out the scourge.

But is the President really sincere? After several postponements of the summit to accommodate the President's tight schedule, after the NCCA leadership formulated a summit program that looks too complementary to the President's agenda, the word from Malacañang is that she would not be able to make an appearance at the event. Worse, Malacañang could not even host the awarding of the Gawad Manlilikha ng Bayan, the state awards for traditional or folk artists. The awarding has been put on hold since February because of the President's hectic schedule. In the meantime, Darhata Sawabi, the Tausug weaver of Sulu and one of the awardees, has died.

The President could find time to have photo opportunities with Jerry Yan, the Viva Hot Babes, Regine Velasquez and the latest show-biz freak, but she has to defer meeting with artists and cultural workers who are at least being polite and open to her agenda for good government. At the very least, this betrays her artistic preference, if not her management style and priorities.



Reading beyond labels

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

LIKE the proverbial bad penny, this issue keeps turning up: Do expiration dates on medicines mean anything?

Critics raked the fund-strapped V. Luna military hospital for accepting donations of drugs nearing expiry dates. Our soldiers deserve better than lapsing—and "ineffective"—medicine, the argument went.

Cebu Board Member Estrella Yapha fumes that a medical mission Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia fielded used "expired drugs" in her home town of Pinamungajan.

Iron-deficiency anemia afflicts 56 percent of pregnant women and 28 percent of pre-school kids in the fourth class municipality, the national nutrition survey found. Pinamungajan officials ladled P10 million in bonuses for themselves between 2004 and 2005, but spent only P600,000 for drugs.

Still the dilemma remains: Do you trash expired medicine? Or don't you?

Expiration dates, which started in 1979, "stand for something," the Harvard Medical School says in its Family Health Guide. "But (it's) probably not what you think it does." The article is part of "updating literature" for all US doctors. Excerpts:

Most of what's known today about drug expiration comes from a question the US military tossed the Food and Drug Administration: Should it junk its $1-billion stockpile of medicine every two or three years?

The FDA studied more than 100 drugs. It found that 90 percent of both prescription and over-the-counter medicines, were perfectly good to use even 15 years after the expiration date.

"Expiration dates don't indicate a point at which the medication is no longer effective or has become unsafe," the Harvard note states. "This is the date at which the manufacturer can guarantee full potency and safety of the drug."

"Many drugs stored under reasonable conditions retain 90 percent of their potency for at least 5 years after the expiration date on the label, and sometimes much longer," notes the Brigham Young University Health Center. A simple device, such as "placing a medication in a cool place, such as a refrigerator, will help a drug remain potent for many years."

Some of the medicines that FDA tests found effective after their expiration dates were: Bayer's anti-biotic Cipro and aspirin and SmithKline Beecham PLC's Thorazine, a tranquilizer. Wyeth-Ayert's antidote to chemical poisoning was still effective 15 years beyond the expiration date.

The FDA's findings saved the US military $263.4 million on its initial grant of $78,000 for the study. We extended shelf lives instead of "destroying large quantities of still-useful medical products," says Francis Flaherty who oversaw the FDA testing program.

This has implications for the Philippines and other poor nations. Here, government clinics are perennially drug-short, from simple aspirin to anti-tuberculosis drugs.

"TB or not TB is the congestion," Woody Allen once wisecracked. But TB is no joking matter here. TB incidence in the Philippines is three times that in Thailand.

But many turn down drug-company donations, if they're within a year of expiration dates. Is misinformation depriving sick people of medicine? "Is there no balm in Gilead?" cried the ancient writers.

"Unless you have nitroglycerin, insulin and liquid antibiotics, you can pretty much be assured that your medication expires years beyond the date it says it does," notes Dr. Joseph Mercola.

"The major tragedy is many Third World countries needlessly discard the drugs that…could actually be saving lives due to lack of appreciation of this concept," adds this author of "Total Health Program."

So, are expiration dates just a marketing ploy? "Look at it another way," the Harvard note suggests. "Expiration dates are very conservative to ensure you get everything you paid for. If a manufacturer had to do expiration-date testing for longer periods, it'd slow their ability to bring you new and improved formulations."

Drug-industry officials don't dispute the results of the FDA's testing, within what is called the Shelf Life Extension Program, reports the Wall Street Journal's Laurie Cohen. "They agree expiration dates have a commercial dimension. But they say relatively short shelf lives make sense from a public-safety standpoint, as well."

"Two to three years is a very comfortable point of commercial convenience," Cohen quotes Mark van Arandonk, senior director for pharmaceutical development at Pharmacia & Upjohn Inc. "It gives us enough time to put the inventory in warehouses, ship it and ensure it will stay on shelves long enough to get used."

But companies uniformly deny any effort to spur sales through planned obsolescence.

US Pharmacopeia, a non-profit scientific group urges pharmacists to peg expiration dates at no more than one year, if drugs are dispensed in containers other than the original packaging.

"New containers may let in more moisture and heat than the container the manufacturer used for the stability study," says USP general counsel Joseph Valentino. The one-year rule is "motivated by product integrity and not by profit."

When faced by the drug expiration date dilemma, the Harvard note suggests a rule of thumb: If the expiration date passed a few years ago and it's important that your drug is absolutely 100 percent effective (as for stroke, cancer, etc.) "you might want to consider buying a new bottle." Or ask your pharmacist.

Indeed, health is better than hard cash. "If you don't have a cold," the Chinese say, "you need not be afraid to eat watermelons."

All-out war

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

I'M glad it's Archbishop Oscar Cruz who's taking up the cudgels against *jueteng*. I'm even gladder that this country has not yet discovered the horrendous practice of murdering archbishops, let alone priests, the way Latin America has. Archbishop Oscar Romero of El Salvador easily comes to mind. Thankfully, the practice never took root here, not even during Marcos' time. Marcos preferred to murder only lay church workers, fearing the backlash the murder of the clergy would have on his rule.

But one may not feel smug about it, certainly not Cruz. The present regime has upped the ante on practically every iniquity—journalists are being massacred and the First Gentleman can only suggest that they brought this upon themselves for acting irresponsibly—and can always open the floodgates to it. As it is, Cruz himself has complained of getting veiled threats about what would happen to him if he continued in his crusade to damn the damnable. But for the most part, his enemies seem more eager to apply themselves to blandishment than threat, only recently sending him an anonymous gift of P10 million. He refused it, of course, not without amusement at the thought his enemies must think him cheap.

I shudder at the thought of Panfilo Lacson being the ball handler here. It is not only because he failed to produce any result on his exposé on Jose Pidal. It is also because he has little credibility in ridding this country of graft. Indeed, that was one of the reasons he failed to produce a result on Jose Pidal: It wasn't only that Mike Defensor showed more resourcefulness in defending his boss, it was also that he showed less than sterling qualities in prosecuting GMA's spouse.

Lacson's attempt to damn the First Couple will always carry with it the aspect of the pot calling the kettle black. To this day, Lacson still has to explain how he lugged around an absolute fortune when he ran for senator (he was the most liquid candidate at the time). More to the point, he still has to explain why, despite his obvious lack of ability to win during the last elections, he persisted in running for president, which clearly favored GMA. Not quite incidentally, all the charges against him about corruption and gunning down suspects in cold blood have disappeared.

But the other more compelling reason I am glad Cruz is at the forefront of things is that he brings a moral dimension to the issue. During the two times that we stamped out a tyranny, which were the two Edsas, there was good and evil written over it. The last one had the church, media, civil society, the business community and ordinary folk, appalled by the desperate straits Erap had driven us to, thundering forth in unison against it. The Catholic Church chief of them. Jaime Cardinal Sin never liked Erap to begin with, seeing him as the biggest sinner of all, and railed bitterly against him as much in the media as in the pulpit.

That's what has been lacking today, until now. As evil goes, the current regime has broken records there. GMA says she will launch an all-out war on illegal gambling in this country, jueteng first and last. That was what she said, too, about drugs, about crime, about the murder of journalists, about terrorism, about corruption, about the numerous scourges that have beset this country. The problem is not just that wars have a way of sprouting around GMA like prickly heat in summer. The problem is that each time she wages all-out war on a scourge, the scourge becomes all-out.

The complete refutation of this is not political, it is moral. So it was in the past, so it will be today. The problem is not political (or economic) bankruptcy, it is moral bankruptcy. The problem is not the rottenness of the body, it is the rottenness of the soul. That's what's causing Filipinos to now trek to other lands like the Israelites away from Egypt in search of a Promised Land, the feeling of being trapped in the country of their birth. The country isn't just grinding to a halt, it's sinking deeper into the bog, the example of lying, cheating and stealing being replicated everywhere, as by Pacific Plans, which is brazenly screwing its subscribers.

The so-called "opposition" as a whole, Lacson included, does not have the moral ascendancy to challenge this. That isn't a story like "Star Wars," or "Lord of the Rings," or Edsa. That isn't a story about good and evil, that is a story about evil and evil.

But again you have to ask what has happened to the church, the media, civil society, the business community and the ordinary folk who raised a fist at far less than this four years ago. I recall that Cardinal Sin and Bishop Socrates Villegas were particularly appalled when the rabble gathered at the Edsa Shrine in protest of Edsa II and decried the desecration of the holy place. Is it possible they can see defilement in unshod feet trampling their favorite shrine but not in the naked hand of greed plucking out the entrails of this country?

I am glad Archbishop Oscar Cruz has taken up the cudgels against iniquity and is protesting it with all the courage and fury he can muster. I am just as glad several other bishops, like Julio Labayen, have thundered forth against tyranny amid the silence of the people they are ironically forced to call their superiors. Cruz is right to warn that if something happened to him, this country may erupt in flames, as an irate populace takes to the street to demand a reckoning. I know I would, as would many others. But why wait for something like that to happen? Why wait for another good man to die? Why wait for gory threat to turn into bloody murder before waging all-out war against it?

The time to be incensed is now. The time to wage all-out war against evil is well past due.

High-caliber OFWs in Africa

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

ALL too soon, it was goodbye to the Republic of South Africa (RSA), the most advanced, broad-based and productive economy in Africa, but also a land of sharp contrasts, as few countries are. Philippine Ambassador Virgilio Reyes tendered a hail-farewell dinner for us last Saturday evening in Pretoria, to which he invited some members of the diplomatic corps and some prominent South Africans. That was the only time we could get together with him, as we were on the road from the time we got to South Africa, while he had just returned from Jakarta and Manila. In Jakarta, he attended the summit of Afro-Asian nations, co-hosted by Indonesia and South Africa, which commemorated the 50th anniversary of the first Afro-Asian summit in Bandung in 1955 hosted by President Sukarno.

* * *

Ambassador Reyes, the son of Virgilio Reyes Sr. who served as press secretary during President Diosdado Macapagal's term, is an old friend. When my husband was ambassador to Cambodia, Virgil was minister counselor in Yangon, Myanmar (Burma), and he was able to visit Phnom Penh. Since then we lost track of him as he was posted to Mexico and Chile before he was appointed as ambassador to South Africa a year and a half ago. We had a nice reunion in Pretoria, where he has a beautiful place overlooking the city, filled with his wide collection of art pieces from various postings. It's common for envoys to South Africa to be accredited to several other countries, so Reyes is also accredited to Angola, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland and Zambia. Though he's based in Pretoria, at least once a year he has to visit these other posts. Nearly 4,000 Filipinos are working in these nine countries, many of them in South Africa.

* * *

South Africa, the wealthiest country in the African continent, is a significant posting for Reyes. For as Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi noted at the Jakarta conference, 2005 is the Year of Africa, and many countries, notably China and Japan, as well as United Nations agencies, anticipating the surge of African nationalism and the development of the various economies in this continent, have been pouring tremendous resources there. It's also significant that after decades without official relations between our two countries since the imposition of apartheid in South Africa in the 1960s, diplomatic relations resumed following Nelson Mandela's election as president in the first democratic elections in 1994. South Africa opened its embassy in Manila last year in reciprocation for the Philippines' diplomatic presence in Pretoria.

* * *

Reyes also pointed out to me that South Africa ranks 32nd among our trading partners and No. 1 among countries in the African continent. Over the last few years, the balance of trade between our two countries has been favorable to South Africa which exports to the Philippines steel and iron products, unmanufactured tobacco, semi-conductors, components/devices, cotton and agricultural products. The country has also been supplying the Department of National Defense with raw materials for the ammunitions plants in Bataan. On the other hand, the Philippine exports to South Africa consist of canned tuna, metal gear boxes of motor vehicles, motor vehicle parts and accessories, photocopying apparatus and pharmaceutical products.

One encouraging development is that last January, the Philippines registered a trade surplus of $300,000 due to a strong surge in tuna exports (good news for General Santos City) and stearyl alcohols. A big exhibition of Asean focusing on trade, tourism and culture will be held in Johannesburg from Nov. 10 to 13 this year, which promises to "pioneer business opportunities and showcase Asean to Africa." Organized by Global Exhibitions, the biggest exhibitor company in South Africa, this could be a good opportunity for our industries to break into the African continent. Inquiries can be made with the Philippine Embassy, 54 Nicolson St., Muckleneuk 0181, Pretoria, South Africa.

* * *

I was quite eager to know the occupations of the nearly 4,000 Filipinos in southern Africa. Reyes told me they are mostly skilled workers as well as high-caliber professionals. Many are technicians (355) and factory garment sewers (728). There are accountants, managers, teachers, engineers, optometrists, geologists, agronomists, dentists, computer analysts and even fashion designers. Interestingly, as the Papal Nuncio in South Africa, Msgr. Blasco Collaco, pointed out to me, a good number of Filipinos in the region are religious missionaries. For instance, aside from the Filipino Carmelites in Cape Town, there are Filipino Benedictine nuns in Namibia, and, in fact, their former regional head is a Filipino. This affirms the fact that Pinoy missionaries are working to "rescue" from extinction convents in various countries not only in Africa, but also in Europe, countries like Ireland, Spain and Bulgaria. Truly, as Carmelite prioress Mary Grace Quiño put it, the late Pope John Paul II is realizing his dream of Filipinos re-Christianizing the world.

* * *

The high caliber of our OFWs in southern Africa is reflected in the fact that there are very few problems they encounter. One problem, though, is occasional delay in the payment of their salaries and retrenchment. Another potential problem Reyes is anticipating is that the current "Economic Empowerment" of black Africans might reduce job opportunities for Filipino professionals and skilled workers in the near future. The ambassador's worry could be related to the effects of the lifting of the terrible apartheid policy here in the last 10 years. Before I close my notebook on South Africa, I will tackle this most interesting issue.

Morally superior?

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

INCOMING Health Secretary Dr. Francisco Duque III told the media recently that he and his wife did not resort to the use of so-called "artificial" methods of contraception as he did not believe in them. "I am not saying that contraceptives are harmful, but they are still chemicals. We really have to know their side effects and if (those) side effects are bad for the health," Duque was quoted as saying. He added though that while he and his wife may not believe in using modern contraceptives, he "does not impose [his] beliefs on anybody."

For a medical doctor, Duque seems to be woefully behind the times. There are over 40 years of research behind contraceptives, especially hormone-based methods. There are countless documents and protocols, including certification by the World Health Organization, attesting to their efficacy and safety. If Duque were indeed that concerned about the side-effects and mechanisms of modern contraceptives, he could access websites that provide evidence-based information. For starters, he could call his own colleagues and subordinates at the Department of Health.

While he professes to keep an open mind, Duque has in fact succeeded in throwing a cloud of doubt over modern contraceptives. Of course, women and men have the right to full information and to quality counseling when choosing a particular method, including warnings on the possible side-effects. But for the health secretary to raise questions about the most effective means of achieving the government's goals, even as he claims he lacks information on them—isn't that like shooting himself in the foot? Unless, of course, further hobbling the already tottering family planning program is in fact his agenda at the DOH.

* * *

TO Duque's credit, he is at least conscious that he shouldn't be imposing his own personal beliefs on others.

Reports have it that the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines is preparing "documentary proof" against health officials who are bearing down on government health personnel who refuse to cooperate with the DOH's "Ligtas Buntis" program. Launched just a few months ago under outgoing Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, "Ligtas Buntis" is a door-to-door campaign bringing reproductive health information and services. If these health personnel have such a hard time accepting the "Ligtas Buntis" program, there's an easy way out for them: they can leave the health service. That way, their fragile consciences would no longer be assaulted by guilt, and they can do work they really believe in.

But to remain with the government health service while depriving their clients of services the clients have decided they want and need, isn't that akin to having your cake and eating it, too? Isn't that imposing your own morality on others, and telling them that they are incapable of making decisions for their own good and that you are not only morally superior to them, you have the power to decide their lives, too?

* * *

I RECENTLY had a talk with officers of the Philippine College of Surgeons Foundation Inc., who were telling me about their project to promote public awareness on non-surgical or no-scalpel vasectomy (NSV), provide free NSV services in selected areas, and train doctors and other health workers in the procedure.

"We wanted to embark on a project that would answer a real need of the country, and helping curb population growth through surgical sterilization was that," said Dr. Arturo dela Pena, the foundation's president. The trouble was, when the board raised the proposed project, many of their members, the majority of whom had graduated from the UST Medical School (run by the Catholic Dominican fathers), at once objected to its implementation and said they could not perform NSV's because of "personal" reasons.

Of course, the objecting doctors have all the right to refuse to perform procedures they find morally repugnant. But then, one must question such judgmental morality. What is more immoral after all, having more children than one can feed or educate, or taking responsibility for one's own fertility? It's all very well for doctors who wish to insulate their consciences to close their minds to NSV or contraception in general. But when they face their Creator and are asked what they did to help their fellow human beings, will they reply: "We only did what we felt comfortable with?"

* * *

ANYWAY, the surgeons, including Dr. Dela Pena; board member Dr. Ed Gatchalian; and Dr. Nikko Magsanoc, assured me that NSV is a simple non-invasive procedure that any trained surgeon can learn just by watching one performed. Indeed, in China where the procedure was perfected and elsewhere in the developing world, including the Philippines, NSV has been successfully taught to health workers.

"All you need is local anesthesia and two simple tools," said Gatchalian. Since the skin is punctured rather than cut, all the client needs afterwards is a band-aid to protect the site from infection. Full protection against pregnancy, however, can be assured only after two-three months or 25-30 ejaculations, so an alternative contraceptive must be used in the meantime.

The trouble, rued De la Pena, is that "while everybody's raring to do the project, we are having trouble finding patients." To their dismay, they are finding it difficult to convince enough Filipino men to undergo NSV, even if the procedure is safe, simple, cheap, quick and effective (permanent, in fact). For this, the doctors place the blame on "men's fears and ignorance, including their acceptance of myths and misconceptions." Including, perhaps, the myth that doctors have the right to impose their moral beliefs on the people they have sworn to serve.

The fault, dear Brutus…

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

UNLESS you're given to spending time in libraries reading esoteric treatises that are of no interest whatsoever to your nearest and dearest, chances are you'd never run into an essay entitled, "Why the 1896 Revolution Failed," by Carlos Quirino. Perhaps some of you in your youth may have spent time mulling over the question, especially if it was part of your history exam, but it's doubtful that most of us would bother to even think about it these days. After all, it happened way before any of us was born. And it's not exactly the kind of question you'd bring up on a social occasion, while sipping wine and sampling canapés.

However, there are people who are interested in such questions, otherwise Quirino would never have bothered to write about it. Now he tells us that some Filipino historians have blamed the failure on the ilustrados, i.e. the educated, the middle class of the time and the wealthy.

Historian Teodoro Agoncillo pointed out that the founding of Liga Filipina by Dr. Jose Rizal was in itself a rejection of armed conflict and a sign that the ilustrado was shying away from revolution, while Bonifacio, a man of the masses started the Katipunan that believed in revolution to gain freedom from Spain. (Except that Bonifacio started it after Rizal was exiled and the Liga failed. While Bonifacio may have thought the Liga useless, he was still willing then to give it a try.) Agoncillo believed that the ilustrados had too much to lose—their wealth, specifically—while the poor had only their lives to lose.

Guillermo Masangkay thought the ilustrados were all talk and no action and didn't want any of them admitted into the Katipunan. On the other hand, the "intellectuals" thought the Katipuneros "plebeian," so the conflict between the "haves" and the "have nots" appears to be nothing new.

Rizal may also have believed that we weren't ready to start a war as was proven by the debacle at the powder magazine in Marikina. Bonifacio depended on their numerical superiority to attack an underground vault dug out of limestone. This was guarded by at least two sentry boxes where a dozen artillery men kept watch. The Spanish contingent immediately asked for help from Manila. The attack was led by Sancho Valenzuela, a rope maker from Sta. Mesa, who directed the men from the window of a wooden house. He and his men were taken prisoner, tried and executed five days later at Bagumbayan. They were the first martyrs of the Revolution.

It doesn't take much to figure out why the attack failed. Perhaps the question should be: why did Bonifacio take on the job of military strategist without any experience or knowledge of the subject? This became the primary reason for subsequent failures as well. In Pandacan, Cabanatuan, Bulacan and Nueva Ecija, the mistakes were repeated. Commanders did not anticipate the arrival of reinforcements, had no blocking troops to intercept or ambush the enemy, not to mention that they didn't have the weapons either. Neither did their flanks have any protection. In effect, the leaders lacked military strategy, and courage was not enough to win battles.

Quirino notes that over a period of 300 years, we only won three battles against the Spaniards. The first was in Mactan against Magellan, who was made to believe that Lapu-Lapu only had 500 men although they turned out to be 1,500. Magellan brought some 60 men with him. Thus, whether he was fighting 500 or 1,500, the over-confident Portuguese didn't have a prayer. (I don't know where Quirino got the figure of 1,500; haven't checked out Pigafetta.)

The second was in the Battle of Binakayan and Noveleta in Cavite in November of 1896 when Aguinaldo, Tirona and Pio del Pilar of Makati counterattacked the Spaniards. Aguinaldo had given strict orders that his soldiers were not to shoot unless the enemy was 50 meters away so that even their antiquated and crude firearms would be effective. The Spanish troops retreated as the Katipuneros advanced. Tirona as well as his aide Latorre and some 50 insurgents died that day.

Generals Santiago Alvarez, Mariano Riego de Dios and Artemio Ricarte held fast at Noveleta behind trenches that stretched for nearly a kilometer and a half against an attack by the Spaniards. After repeated attacks failed, the Spaniards retreated.

The ilustrados did come around after the Battle of Manila Bay when Aguinaldo returned from Hong Kong and everyone thought the Americans would support the Revolution against Spain. But Aguinaldo who wasn't *masa* didn't trust them either. He kept an eye on Felipe Buencamino and made his brother, Baldomero Aguinaldo secretary of war so that he could watch over Antonio Luna who had studied military strategy and tactics in Europe. We all know how that mistrust turned out for Luna.

So perhaps it was more than the lack of trained military commanders and suitable arms. We couldn't get our act together then, and we can't seem to get it together now. We appear to be perfect examples of people who don't learn from the past and are therefore doomed to commit the same mistakes over and over.

'Para'

YOUNG BLOOD

Giancarla Espinosa

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

AFTER SO MANY attempts to delay the inevitable, I finally did it. I finally bought one of those P100 MRT cards.

This is, by far, the biggest commitment I have made to public transportation. Now I feel like I am married to a train. Or at least, I have a hundred reasons to feel obliged to take the MRT from now on.

Owning The Card not only signals the retirement of my strappy heels. (Never traverse Makati's spit-laden streets in open-toed shoes unless you plan on mincing around like a geisha on ice. Trust me, it is not worth it.) But it is also symptomatic of getting old.

Yes, ladies and gentlemen, I am finally in the position to declare myself an adult. I no longer have the privilege of taking school buses or being driven to school by the family driver or willing parents. I am now a bona fide, albeit reluctant, commuter.

From here on, I have to learn how to endure a stranger's elbow painfully stuck to my rib if I want to get home. I have to learn how to ignore the olfactory assault of girls who douse (not splash) themselves with baby cologne every five seconds. I need to walk fast, be alert and, for goodness' sake, remember to take off my watch before I head out of the building.

For the most part, I think that inhaling a lungful of smog each time I breathe is no fun at all. But it is not comparable to the end of the world, as I whined to my dad when he said that it would be impractical to drive to Makati. (Yes, I know, I have always tended to dramatize some things.)

I must say that commuting really is not that bad, notwithstanding all the discomfort. Taking public transportation provides a different view of the things that I tend to take for granted. At the very least, it is a learning experience.

For instance, one thing I learned is that chivalry is dead. It is dead, gone and buried under six feet of wishful thinking. Contrary to what you see in the movies, I have never seen anyone give up his seat to a girl or the elderly. Apparently, the urge to be comfortable is a lot stronger than the call for good manners.

But I also learned that chivalry is overrated. From the comfort of your own car, being treated well is of utmost significance. However, your priorities shift when you are caught in a cramped space, suspiciously eyeing people who are suspiciously eyeing you back.

Forget about finding a seat. You will just be glad if you come out with your things intact and feel lucky that your train wasn't blown up by someone who was trying to make a statement or make trouble, depending on how you look at things.

The best part about commuting is that you learn how to be thankful for the things that went well and learn how to forgive the rest.

At the risk of being overly philosophical, public transportation can be a metaphor for life in general. For example, when a fellow passenger asks you to pass the fare to the driver, you are expected to hand him back the change. You cannot back out of a responsibility once you have taken it on.

Strangers can fall asleep on your shoulder just as easily as you can fall asleep on theirs. The moral of this? It is okay to let your guard down once in a while.

You also cannot choose who sits beside you when you take public transportation. Just as in real life, no matter how picky you are or how much you kick and scream, you cannot always have your way.

Letting go of preconceived notions is one of the first things you learn when you start commuting. I once sat beside a guy who could easily have been a henchman in a Rudy Fernandez movie or a professional wrestler. If he so much as just lifted a finger, everyone would have jumped. But this monster of a man spent the entire trip reading Robert James Waller's "The Bridges of Madison County," a favorite among starry-eyed *colegialas*, which made him a glaring symbol of harmlessness, if you ask me.

The other day, I was walking toward the Magallanes MRT station in Makati, when a car filled with rowdy boys slowed down long enough for them to yell, *"Hoy, miss! Puwede makipagkilala?"*

Before I could open my mouth to blurt out a retort, a middle-aged woman with a gold tooth and a wet cigarette between her lips screamed, *"Bastos!"* effectively robbing me of the "miss" title.

Humility, it seems, is another lesson that can be learned when one takes public transportation to get from point A to point B. I have the habit of watching other people when I commute. One time I was looking out of the window of the jeepney I was riding in when I saw a girl driving a Toyota Rav4 turn up the air-conditioning in her car, making her long hair flutter. That made me all the more conscious that mine was pasted on my skull by so much sweat.

That experience reminded me of another lesson commuting offers: While it is important to grit your teeth and appreciate the things you have, there is always, always a better way.

Giancarla Espinosa, 22, is a recent journalism graduate of the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

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THEY SAID

Distaste

"We must not underestimate the Filipino people's continued distaste for public corruption spawned by *jueteng* operations."

—Senate President Franklin Drilon on speculations that the biggest recipients of jueteng payoffs are relatives of a top government official

Goodbye

"My intuition was telling me this was goodbye."

—Dolly Borlongan on the text message she received from her husband Ted shortly before he committed suicide

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Social conscience

I COULD not agree more with Justice Isagani Cruz about some people's (I hope not the majority) utmost disregard and disrespect for our national flag and anthem. (PDI, 5/15/05) While his column gave detailed accounts of his son's experience, the article failed to appeal to our national leaders and police to do something about it. The article should have mentioned that the people in the executive and legislative branches have the obligation and are in a position to address this issue. I don't know if Justice Cruz would agree, but I cannot fully blame those who do not show respect to our flag and anthem anymore, since there is really nothing to be proud of as a Filipino these days. Corruption, *jueteng*, illegal drug-related stories, and murders are all the news that we see and hear. Justice Cruz's column is widely read, not only by classes A, B and C, but also by people in government.

He can use his column to appeal to our national leaders' conscience, for them to show good examples, to act with political will, to punish those who are guilty no matter who they are, and to generate more jobs for people. Media then should banner these stories, and if this kind of news is sustained, then maybe, just maybe, we Filipinos can all be proud again. Lastly, I want to say that, yes, I do share Justice Cruz's social conscience.

—BUTCH, vnep2003@yahoo.com

Garcia's cash advances all accounted for

IN THE INQUIRER editorial, "Ethically challenged" (PDI, 5/9/05), GSIS' Winston Garcia was mentioned as one of those "officials who are ethically challenged, if not outright corrupt," all because he stood his ground on the issue of cash advances and the eCard project.

Please allow us to make the following clarifications:

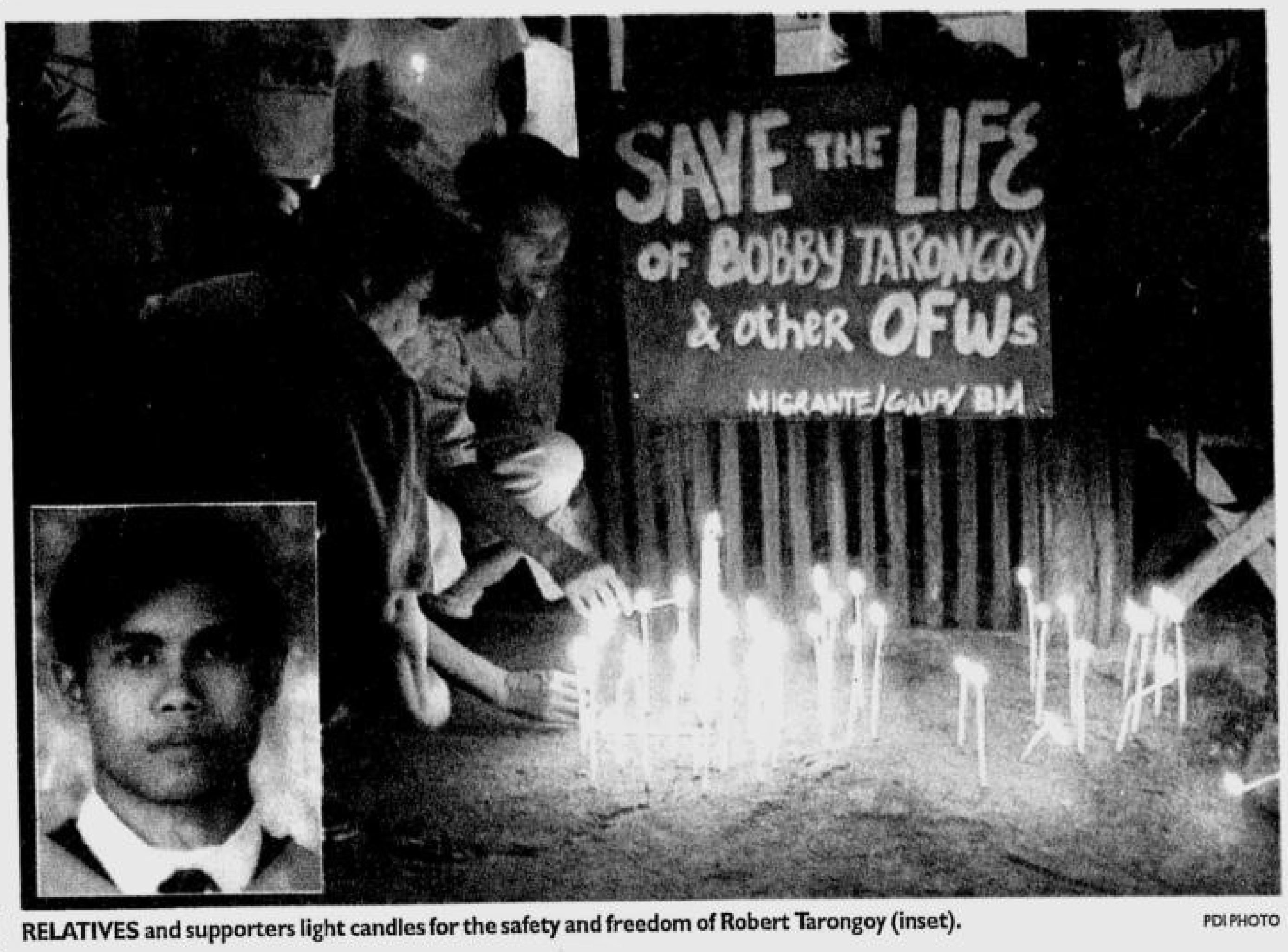
First, Garcia's cash advances are an overly stretched-out issue that has already been answered in countless forums. For the record, the cash advances did not go to his pockets. Neither were these spent for lavish purposes.

The cash advances were used to implement the GSIS reform agenda, which was started in 2003. These covered the expenses for meals and other costs incurred when nearly 3,000 GSIS employees from its more than 40 offices worked overtime, almost on a 24-hour shifting schedule, to update the individual records of the 1.3 million GSIS members. The money was also used to finance equipment, office supplies and manpower of government agencies when the GSIS asked for copies of the transaction records of all GSIS members since 1997. The sum was also utilized for the training of GSIS personnel and representatives of member-agencies for the implementation of the GSIS premium-based policy.

Every cent that Garcia advanced has been liquidated, as prescribed by Commission on Audit Circular 89-300. Both the resident COA auditor and the COA head office issued separate certifications attesting to the fact that Garcia, as of 2004, has no outstanding cash advance.

Also, Garcia has no relative affiliated with the Union Bank. Likewise, the eCard did not cost the GSIS billions of pesos as the cost of the card translates to a mere P25 per member. Union Bank was chosen as our eCard partner after the GSIS went through an exhaustive search for proposals from several banks—government and privately owned, including Land Bank. In the end, the GSIS chose Union Bank because it not only demonstrated its capability to provide a technical backbone for the eCard, but it also offered the best set of services for the GSIS.

—ELLA E. VALENCERINA,
vice president,
Public Affairs Office


SAVE THE LIFE of BOBBY TARONGOY & other OFWs
MIGRANTE/GWP/BM

RELATIVES and supporters light candles for the safety and freedom of Robert Tarongoy (inset). PDI PHOTO

Is Tarongoy still alive?

HOW'S the fate of Robert Tarongoy, an overseas Filipino Worker who was kidnapped six months ago in Iraq? Tarongoy seems to have been completely abandoned. He was last seen on a video that was aired by Al Jazeera television two months ago. Since then, little, if any at all, has been heard about his condition and whereabouts. It seems that his situation is deliberately being kept a secret.

Is Tarongoy still alive or dead? Is the Arroyo government pursuing its efforts to save Tarongoy's life? Or has this government already abandoned him and shirked its responsibility to bring him back to his suffering family? I wonder why Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo and Undersecretary Rafael Seguis have kept their mouths shut on Tarongoy's case. There seems to be a news blackout on Tarongoy.

Meanwhile, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas seems to have washed her hands by blaming the issue on Filipinos who are illegally entering Iraq. They will not be there in the first place if this government did not push them to work in that country by keeping high the poverty incidence here.

How about the Office of External Affairs? This government agency, which was created to help and support the problems of migrant workers abroad, remains inutile. Instead of providing assistance, it has instead become a burden to OFWs. The officials of this agency only know how to collect money from the OFWs. The people in that office are working there only to make profits. It should be abolished!

Where is Robert Tarongoy? The question will persist until his abductors show once again that he is still alive or dead. Meanwhile, Malacañang keeps us in the dark thinking that we will eventually forget the poor OFW. Malacañang, of course, is wrong to think that we will forget.

—LITO MABAQUIAO,
spokesperson, Migrante-Manila,
migrante.manila@gmail.com

There was more on 'not enough'

THIS is to clarify the statement attributed to me in a news report on the verdict reached by the military tribunal on the possible release of the 184 soldiers who participated in the so-called July 2003 Oakwood mutiny. (PDI, 5/13/05)

The issues raised by the Magdalo group remain valid, just and compelling. Corruption in the Armed Forces of the Philippines thrives and has yet to be decisively addressed by the government.

The Oakwood mutiny served as a venue for the soldiers to dramatize their protest against the widespread corruption and irregularities in the AFP. The sentences on the soldiers—demotion by three ranks, forfeiture of two-thirds of their basic salaries for three to six months, and confinement with hard labor for a year—are harsh and severe.

My statement, "that is not enough," refers to the release of the soldiers. The junior officers must likewise be freed from detention. Along with this, however, genuine reforms must be consequently instituted to curb the endemic corruption in the military.

An outright dismissal from the service will neither rectify nor heed the legitimate struggle of the mutineers. This will only fuel further resistance and desire for meaningful reforms which may eventually lead to another possible rebellion.

Being a Mindanaoan myself, I have personally seen how foot soldiers have been used, abused and exploited by high-ranking military officers in the far south. They have been trained to abide by the military's chain of command and stick to it at all costs even if it meant further fomenting war and strife in the island at the expense of thousands of civilians.

It is unfortunate that close to two years after the incident, serious reforms in the military remain to be seen. If at all, we are witness to widespread graft and corruption among the top brass while foot soldiers who are on the front lines virtually scrimp on their meager pay. The military likewise continues to enjoy immunity from being called to account for the numerous cases of human rights violations attributed to them.

—JOEL G. VIRADOR,
representative,
Bayan Muna Party-List,
Rm. 617 South Wing,
House of Representatives,
Quezon City

Barangay hall on a sidewalk

THIS is to bring to public attention an ongoing construction on the sidewalk in front of our residence at the corner of Pag-Asa Street and A. Bonifacio Avenue in Quezon City. When I inquired, I found out that it is a barangay hall. This is most irregular because it is illegal to put up buildings on sidewalks, especially in Metro Manila. I am sure that the MMDA chair will agree with me on this, considering his strong stand against sidewalk obstructions.

Not only is the construction illegal, it will do us, small lot owners in the area, an injustice. If this construction will be allowed to continue, the value of our lot will go down, seriously affecting not only our economic circumstances but also the city government itself. If small lot owners like us cannot get protection from the government, I wonder how our less fortunate countrymen can seek redress.

Also, a barangay hall on a busy urban street would be totally out of place and an eyesore.

I am therefore strongly appealing to our officialdom—the MMDA, the Department of Interior and Local Government and the civil society championing the cause of the urban poor and of urban development—to lend their voice and authority to stop the construction of this illegal structure. I have trust in the sense of fairness and leadership of Mayor Feliciano Belmonte. I sincerely hope that he will address this major concern by immediately issuing an order to stop this illegal construction.

—ROLANDO Z. LOYOLA,
20 Pag-Asa St.,
Barrio San Jose, Caloocan City

Forgotten because they pose no threat

WORLD War II veterans and the AFP retirees are no different in the contemplation of laws that grant them pensions. All of them served the country or fought the enemies of the state in defense of freedom, democracy and loved ones. These could be the thinking and sentiment of the remaining war veterans even as they welcomed the announcement of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo approving the release of P300 million in June to partially pay the pension arrears that the government owed over 100,000 military retirees and veterans.

As may be gleaned, however, from the news item titled "Palace starts paying AFP pension arrears" by Gil Cabacungan (PDI, 4/28/2005), the dwindling veterans of World War II are excluded from this bounty insofar as the disability pension under Republic Act 6948 is concerned, which has never been implemented since the law's enactment on April 9, 1990 or 15 years ago. President Arroyo singled out the AFP retirees for these pension benefits and left out the World War II veterans who are now in the twilight of their lives and can no longer threaten the government. The retired soldiers and officers are after all "threatening to call for civil disobedience against the government in protest over Malacañang's inaction on their demand for the payment of the P17 billion pensions and other benefits due them over the past years" as stated in a news report titled "Unpaid veterans threaten action." (PDI, 4/11/2005)

Will the President do the same swift action upon reading also the article "Senator says gov't owes vets P24B" by Nestor P. Burgos, Jr.? (PDI, 3/24/2005)

—GODOFREDO O. PETEZA,
district adjutant,
Veterans Federation of the Philippines,
Chartered under R.A. 2640,
Camarines Norte Veterans District,
Pasig, Daet,
Camarines Norte

Only in the Philippines

IT is quite possible that the "MD-RN phenomenon," so clearly described by Dr. Jun R. Ruiz, is unique to the Philippines. I know of no other country where somebody who is already a medical doctor is forced by the circumstances of his country to study to be a registered nurse. The simple explanation is that the medical doctor needs to be an RN to be able to find work, preferably in the United States, where a licensed registered nurse makes the kind of money which that doctor is not able to earn, as a physician, in the Philippines. As it happens, the US does not allow Filipino medical doctors to work in the United States. Those two bills now pending in the Philippine Congress, which seeks to penalize doctors for malpractice, are ill-advised in my opinion considering the fact that the status quo is proving difficult enough for doctors who choose to stay and practice medicine in their own country. I would advise the proponents and supporters to reconsider; they surely have better things to do than make life harder than it is already for Filipino doctors.

—MARIANO PATALINJUG,
CoraMar127@aol.com

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The high prices of fuel, food, electricity, tuition, transportation and consumer goods make me feel ________.

...lucky! why? i have no cars, i dont eat a lot, i use kero to light my nights, i dont have children to send to school
—Dan Ballener, *Iloilo*

makes me feel more motivated to study hard...
—Jeffrey Dumanjog, *Cotabato*

The high prices... makes me feel that going back to the Stone Age is not a bad idea anymore.
—EddieK, *Morong*

vulnerable, scared and worried with the kind of future my kids might end up with should I fail to live up to my role as their parent
—Peter Cawaing, *Sta. Rosa*

Sipag at tiyaga, Positive thinking, & faith ALWAYS helps us succeed
—Lyn, *Makati City*

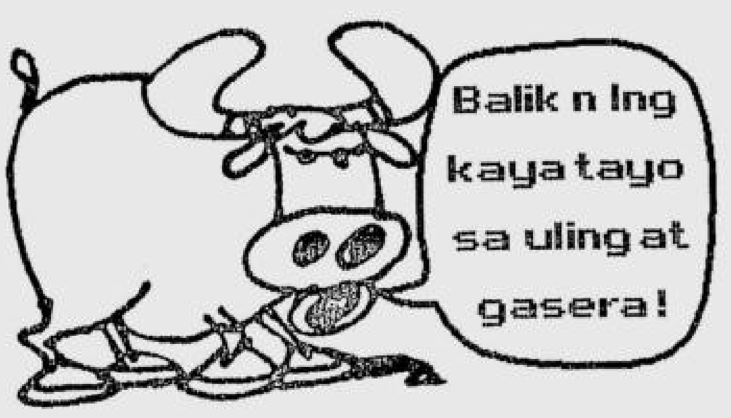
HOPELESS 4 our cOuntry. nO natiOn prOgresses wn its ppl r starving n living in pOverty...cn n01 hlp us in ds ordeal?bt wt els is new?
—Katz, *Davao City*

a little bit older for now i keep saying "noong kapanahunan ko ganito lng ang mga presyo ng mga bilihin"
—Cassel R. Dujali, *Panabo City*

Eager 2 strive more with my studies 2 somhow contrbute 2 D possible imprvmnt of r cntry in d near future.
—John Andri Cunanan, *General Santos City*

that we need to live a simple and responsible lyf, we need not blame d govt. or anyone... this s filipino lyf, LIVE IT! LOVE IT!
—Joy, *Baguio City*

like going 2 batanes,ang sarap 2mira dun as seen on inqtv.
—Godofredo Garbin, *GMA Cavite*


Balik n lng kaya tayo sa uling at gasera!

challenged and more trustful and faithful to God bcoz He alone can suffice all the things that we need 2 live peacefully.
—Geniviel Asis, *Daet*

helpless and makes me want to earn mOre to afford them.
—Katrina Luna, *Quezon City*

high prices make me feel poorer especialy nowadays. we nid 2 sav more or use less electrcty
—Charmie Arianne Z. Dumago, *Cag. de Oro City*

out of a free world where everyone should experience life with affordable needs.
—Ryan Mangusan, *Baguio City*

...make me feel like migrating to another country.
—Rose Bridget Rubi, *Davao city*

extremely angry n insecure coz mas malaki pa ata ang itinaas ng presyo ng mga commodities na i2 kesa sa sweldo ko!!!
—Tes Obana, *Polangui*

that the only hope we have is God and His most powerful grace can help us survive these trying times.
—Limuel Abrogena, *Isabela*

makes me feel sorry 4 all d filipinos.we suffer a lot from ds crisis alredy & ds limit our freedom.
—Circe Grace Jimenez, *Negros*

being robbed by a faceless blight on Earth!
—Rio P. Juntereal, *Infanta, Quezon*

...Makes me feel cheated by the oil cartels with blessings from hi rank govt officials
—Jeff Valcorza, *Davao*

More than 90 journalists have been killed in the Philippines since 1986. The Committee to Protect Journalists has identified the Philippines as "the most murderous country for journalists," followed by Iraq, Colombia, Bangladesh and Russia. What should be done to stop the killings?

Oder dan gvin st8mnts condemin d kilin f jrnlists,d people shld do wat dey can 2 help.B Vgilant,tesT-fy,aRest,convic
—Candice Cerezo, *Manila*

responsible and honest journalism must be advocated and practised
—Michelle Roldan, *Digos City*

Both media companies and natl govt should take an active role in the protection of our journalist
—Winston Obidos, *Makati City*

we hav 2 change d boss. as in corporate system, f u can not reach d target, shape up or ship out.
—Celso Cerbo, *Cavite*

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Koreans bar mayor's wife, face ouster

By Leila B. Salaverria and Miko Morelos

OF ALL the customers they barred from their shop, it had to be Cebu City's first lady.

For allegedly doing just that, four Koreans have been arrested by immigration agents and are now facing deportation charges.

Bureau of Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said he ordered the foreigners' arrest in response to a Cebu City council resolution, urging the bureau to look into their alleged maltreatment of Margot Osmeña, wife of Mayor Tomas Osmeña.

The resolution, which was passed on April 13, was prompted by reports that Mrs. Osmeña was twice stopped from entering Saboten Handicraft, a souvenir shop near the Mactan Cebu International Airport (MCIA) in Lapu-Lapu City on Mactan Island, Cebu.

Mrs. Osmeña first went to Saboten in 2003 to check reports that Filipinos were not allowed to enter the shop. The guard stopped her and told her that the shop was "closed" although it was not.

In 2004, she happened to be at the MCIA again, this time, with her husband-mayor, when she decided to drop by Saboten to check if it still turned away local clients. As what happened before, the guard told her that the store was closed.

Mrs. Osmeña did not file any complaint, but she mentioned the incident to Cebu Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia during a dinner in April.

Garcia immediately issued a stern warning to Saboten and ordered a crackdown on establishments that discriminated against Filipinos.

The management of the shop denied the allegations and said they had already dismissed the guard for turning away local clients. But Margot said the guard would not have done it had he not been given orders.

Saboten owner Hwy Chang-park sent flowers and a letter of apology to the Osmeñas and Garcia. The gestures failed to soften them.

"This is not about me. It just happened that I was the one who went there and it just happened that I am the wife of Tommy (Osmeña). I wonder how many people have been turned away. And will they apologize to all these people?" Mrs. Osmeña said in an earlier interview.

Garcia reiterated her warning to establishments not to discriminate against local clients or else she would take more drastic actions.

BI intelligence chief Faisal Hussin described the Koreans' refusal to let Ms Osmeña enter their shop as a classic case of racial discrimination.

"Apparently, Mrs. Osmeña was refused entry to the store as its owners have declared the establishment off-limits to Filipinos," he said in a statement.

The Koreans, who were identified as Lee Tai-woo, Choi Young-wook, Cha Yun-bok and Park Why-whang, were arrested on May 17 inside their shop. They are facing deportation charges for being undesirable aliens.

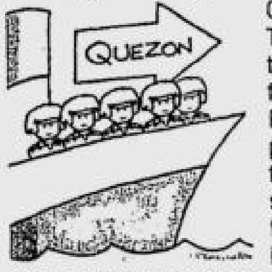
In their resolution, Cebu City councilors castigated the foreigners for humiliating the wife of their chief executive.

ROUNDUP

Farmer kills wife, sons

BACOLOD CITY—A farmer hacked to death his wife and two young sons in a fit of jealousy past midnight on May 17 in Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental. The police launched a manhunt for Robito Maglasang, 30, who allegedly killed wife Mia, 25, and their children Rommel, 4, and Ariel, 1, inside their home in Sitio Cara-an, Barangay Tampalon, Kabankalan, about 97.6 km south of here. SPO1 Walter Seron, Kabankalan police desk officer, said jealousy was suspected to be the motive as Robito was reportedly teased by his friends on Monday that his wife had a suitor. Robito confronted Mia when he got home in the evening, which ensued in a fight. Francisco Pasonala, Mia's brother, pacified the couple, a report of RGMA Super Radyo said. Seron said at past midnight, Robito allegedly hacked his wife and his children who were fast asleep. The bodies were discovered in the morning by Porferio Maglasang who immediately informed the police. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Army unit pulled out



CITY OF CALAPAN—The 16th Infantry Battalion of the 204th Infantry Brigade of the Philippine Army was pulled out of Occidental Mindoro and reassigned in Quezon in the second week of May. It swapped assignment with the 80th IB. The 68th IB is still in Oriental Mindoro, according to 2Lt. Juvily de la Fuente-Cabading, spokesperson of the 204th IB. Col. Ralph Villanueva, 204th IB commander, said there was a rotation of units ordered by the higher headquarters. *Madonna T. Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Japanese hunted

BIÑAN, Laguna—Police are hunting a Japanese national who allegedly beat up his live-in partner on May 7, rendering her incapacitated for almost a week. A police report from the Biñan Municipal Police Office identified the Japanese suspect as Tsutomu Aoyama, 48, president of Auto Feria and a resident of Barangay Canlalay here. The victim, Cherie Amour M. Ragos, 23, of Calamba City, reported that at about 6 p.m. on May 7, Aoyama beat her up and dragged her outside their apartment in Canlalay. She said the injuries she suffered incapacitated her for five days. *Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

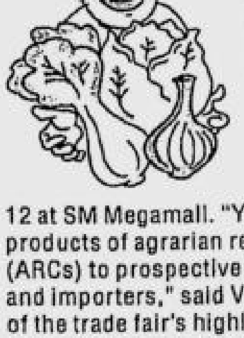
11 bar girls nabbed

CALAMBA CITY—Police arrested 11 bar girls without working permits in a series of operations on several videoke bar joints in Barangay San Cristobal here May 17. The Calamba City Police Office said the suspects were facing a complaint for violation of a city ordinance. *Romulo O. Ponte, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

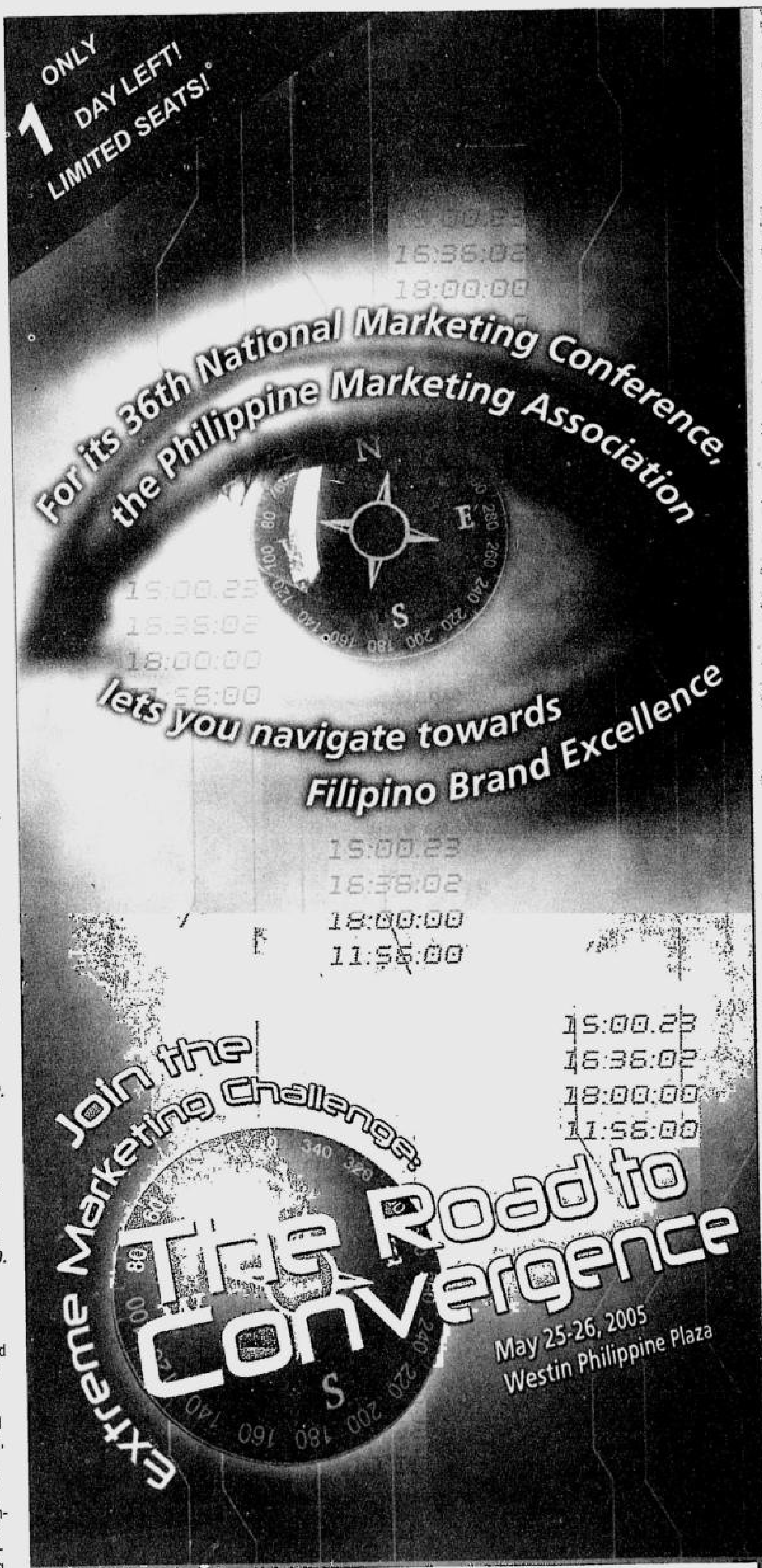
'Schools First' program

THE DEPARTMENT of Education launched on Saturday its "School First" program here aimed at improving the country's educational system by involving all sectors of society in running the affairs of every school. Gov. Ben P. Evardone and Schools Division Superintendent Sol F. Acidre, who led in the launching ceremonies, vowed to mobilize all the stakeholders to ensure the success of the program. The schools' governing boards, to be composed of representatives of the local government, nongovernment organizations, DepEd, Parents Teachers Associations and student groups, will be organized and these will be responsible for running the affairs of every school.

Agrarian trade fair



MATCHING the products of the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) with the right market is key in helping them, according to Land Reform Secretary Rene Villa, as he endorsed the Agraryo Trade Fair scheduled on June 8-12 at SM Megamall. "You will expose the products of agrarian reform communities (ARCs) to prospective buyers, both exporters and importers," said Villa in a statement. One of the trade fair's highlights is teaching the ARCs marketing techniques. The Department of Land Reform, together with its corporate arm, the National Agribusiness Corp. (Nabcor), will share with farmer "knowledge of new markets and the dynamics of marketing."



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Controversial coed not really pregnant, attempts suicide

An 18-year-old nursing student attempted to commit suicide Sunday in her family's rented apartment in Sampaloc, Manila.

An empty bottle of painkillers, suggesting overdose, was seen near Jenelyn Apacible, 18, who was discovered semi-conscious by her father Epifanio in her room. She was rushed to the emergency room of the Sta. Rita Charity Hospital also in Sampaloc.

APACIBLE

Apacible first figured in the news early March in the Jerson Morales murder case, which has remained unsolved as of press time. The night before Morales was fatally shot in the Purple Pear Bar, Apacible allegedly claimed to be pregnant by Morales, a management executive who was already engaged to be married to socialite and popular wedding planner Vivienne Ledesma. More recently, Apacible was reported to have made a scene during the funeral of Morales. Both Apacible and her father are considered suspects to Morales' killing.

In a two-page suicide note written by the young woman, Apacible apologized to her widowed father – who works as the security supervisor of Purple Pear and was described by his daughter as a hardworking man – for lying to him about being pregnant by Morales. This information was confirmed by the hospital's emergency room chief resident Dr. Leandro Natividad who said that based on tests conducted by the hospital, Apacible had never been pregnant. He added that Apacible is out of danger but is still under observation.

Apacible also expressed in the suicide note her guilt in having failed to tell Morales the truth.

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400 hospitalized as gastro strikes remote Leyte town

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—Close to 400 persons were taken ill when gastroenteritis hit Baybay town in Leyte, which was believed to have been triggered by a contaminated spring from where residents take their drinking water.

Baybay Mayor Jose Carlos Cari said the rural health unit recorded 398 patients of gastroenteritis, 198 of them confined at the provincial district hospital.

"They were confined at the hospital for less than three days," the mayor said, adding that many of the patients left the hospital after receiving medical treatment.

Of the town's 92 barangays, 46 were affected by the outbreak with Barangay Villa Mag-aso as the hardest hit with more than 50 gastroenteritis cases.

But Cari said there was nothing to worry about as the disease had been contained after he ordered officials of the water district to temporarily close the spring in Barangay Villa Mag-aso pending its "treatment."

"We have already distributed medicines and fluids to all affected persons..." he said.

He said the provincial government under Gov. Jericho Petilla, his cousin, also distributed medicines to the affected individuals.

Cari said the first case of gastroenteritis was reported on May 15 in Barangay Villa Mag-aso, where the spring was.

The spring was the main drinking water source of Baybay town, 106 km west from here, which had a population of 106,000.

Many residents complained of headache, stomach cramps, fever, diarrhea and vomiting, which were symptoms of gastroenteritis.

On May 18, the municipal health unit, headed by Dr. Margie Olo, started to be alarmed due to what Cari said "high admittance of gastroenteritis cases" at the Western Leyte District Hospital.

The mayor said he immediately called an emergency meeting with officials of the rural health unit and the Baybay water district office.

BEACH TRADE
Vendors of various products have come in droves to Boracay Island to try to seize on the opportunity to earn a living from the tourists that flock to the island's white sand beaches and clear blue waters. JOAN BONDOC

Couple sues Cebu club for daughter's drowning

By Jolene R. Bulambot
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—An exclusive sports and recreation club here was sued by the parents of a 3-year-old girl who drowned in its swimming pool while attending a birthday party in February.

John and Agnes Ruiz yesterday filed a civil case for damages against Casino Español de Cebu Inc. and its president Roberto Aboitiz for allegedly failing to install safety measures in the pool area that could have saved the life of their daughter Jannine Angelica.

In their complaint, the couple asked the court to compel the respondents to pay them P9 million in damages—P8 million in moral, temperate and exemplary damages and P1 in attorney and litigation fees.

Bunny Pages, house chair and director of Casino Español, told the INQUIRER that they would answer the charges in court although he maintained that the girl's death was an accident.

"We felt we acted in prudence. We are conscious about safety and it was indeed an unfortunate incident. It was actually an accident and it was not due to our negligence. We would like to assure the public that we are always prudent," Pages said.

The Ruiz family attended a poolside birthday party at Casino Español by one of the children of a club member on Feb. 19.

Jannine Angelica, the couple's eldest daughter, fell in the swimming pool of Casino Español and drowned.

Lawyer Raymond Fortun told a news conference yesterday that the complaint was founded on the failure of the company to install safety measures and exercise due diligence toward its customers.

Agnes also said it took them three months to file the case because they were still grieving.

In an eight-page complaint, the Ruiz couple alleged that the management failed to assign personnel who were properly trained in lifesaving, cardio pulmonary resuscitation and first-aid procedures at the pool area.

Agnes said that when her daughter was fished out of the water, they had to wait for five minutes for club personnel to arrive so the girl could be given first aid treatment and CPR.

When nobody from the club arrived, the guests decided to rush her to the hospital where she later died.

The couple also noted that there was no lifeguard tower at that time.

The couple further alleged that the club's swimming pool area was slippery.

Theft of water meters in Naga City increasing

NAGA CITY—A water utility executive has raised alarm over the rising number of cases of stolen water meters since March this year.

In a report presented to the city council here yesterday, Cesar Federizon, operations manager of the Metro Naga Water District (MNWD), said in three months, the water utility firm had lost 53 water meters to theft.

Federizon said they suspected that the bronze water meters stolen were sold to junk buyers.

But Marilyn Pante, representative of junk shop owners in the city, said in the same forum that all the licensed junk shops here were already informed since last month about the water meter theft.

Pante told the city council that their members had not bought a single stolen water meter and instead pointed out that junk buyers from other places operating in Naga City could be the ones buying the stolen gadgets.

She said the current price of bronze sold to junk shops ranges from P60 to P100 a kg while iron junks are bought at P9 to P10 a kg here.

Senior Supt. Ramon Ranara, chief of police of Naga City, said the rising number of cases of stolen bronze water meters and increasing cases of robbery and theft had been noted this month.

Ranara said the rise in robbery and theft cases coincided with the enrollment month.

But Ranara said the bigger problem is poverty and lack of jobs. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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Ladies' Division Champion wins a trip to the HSBC Women's World Match Play Championship at Hamilton Farm Golf Club in New Jersey, USA

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SCHOOL CHORE BING GONZALES/PDI MINDANAO

A parent volunteers to paint the gates of an elementary school in Davao City. School officials sought the help of volunteers to spruce up school facilities in time for the opening of classes next month.

GUARD BEFRIENDED

Top E. Visayas NDF leader, 2 others escape from jail

By Cyrain Cabueñas
PDI Visayas Bureau

BORONGAN, Eastern Samar—A high-ranking officer of the communist-led National Democratic Front (NDF) and two others bolted the provincial jail in this capital town on Saturday, without much resistance from the lone guard.

Gregorio Tadeos, alias Ka Jonas, NDF secretary general in Eastern Visayas, and cell mates Rogelio Basibas, 30, and Benjamin Madolid, 20, escaped from jail in Barangay Bato after a drinking session with PG1 Renato Rafael Sesesta Jr. at about 8 p.m.

Police and military authorities are now hunting Tadeos, 40, who is facing charges of multiple murder, robbery in band and illegal possession of firearms before a court in Oras town, about 45 km north of here.

Madolid is facing homicide and frustrated homicide charges, while Basibas has been charged with murder.

Gov. Ben Evardone ordered an investigation of the jailbreak by a multisectoral group.

Investigation showed that Tadeos had befriended Sesesta since he was held at the provincial jail on Nov. 28, 2004.

Sesesta did not follow a standard operating procedure to lock the doors of the cells at 5 p.m. when it came to Tadeos, said provincial jail warden Alexandrino Apelado Jr.

Based on the investigation, the three went to the guardhouse, located about 20 meters from the main building, after taking their dinner at about 7 p.m. on Saturday. At that time, Sesesta's partner, PG1 Rodrigo Bagacay did not report for work.

The four talked while drinking beer, said Apelado. During their "session," Sesesta noticed two vans passing outside the main gate.

He ignored the vans until the third time that that the they passed by the jail facility. He then asked an inmate-trustee to check it out.

The inmate reported to him that one of the vans was colored maroon. The other was blue, which was driven by a woman dressed in a habit.

Tadeos pulled out a .38 cal. pistol from his pants and poked it at Sesesta's forehead. Basibas took the shotgun displayed at the guardhouse and pointed it at the jail guard.

"When I heard the shotgun cocked, I ducked and ran away," said Sesesta.

"Fortunately, the shotgun had no bullets. I got so rattled that I forgot to fire my .45 cal. pistol."

The guard said the three threatened the trustees not to go after them before running to the hills at the back of the compound.

Apelado said he believed that Tadeos decided to escape because he felt that his life was in danger inside the jail.

The fear was triggered by three incidents. One happened a month ago when a prisoner tried to stab Tadeos.

With a report from Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau

Budget chief says LGUs key to progress

PILI, Camarines Sur—Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin said on Saturday that local initiatives were needed to bring back the country's economy back to its level in the 1960s.

"Local initiatives would bring us back to the glory of the '60s," said Boncodin, an honoree of the 426th foundation week of Camarines Sur. She hails from Iriga City,

She said the economy in the 1960s was almost at par with that of Japan, which has the fastest growth in Asia.

Local initiatives could address some of the most pressing problems of the economy because they could be effectively done with political will, the budget chief said.

She added that local initiatives, like events designed to generate economic activities and self-worth, could propel a town to progress.

Boncodin said she was amazed at how the foundation event was organized, bursting in bright colors and fireworks and mounting a motorcade of 803 vehicles in Nabua, 60 km from the sprawling 118-hectare Capitol Complex in this town, where the grand opening of the "Kaogma Festival" was held.

"It is amazing to know that such celebration is happening here in my home province," she said. Boncodin left Iriga more than 30 years ago. She brought along her family to Metro Manila to concentrate on her executive career.

The Kaogma Festival has been held every year since 1997 on May 21-27 in celebration of the province's founding. It has been adopted as a promotional vehicle of the provincial government to attract investments and eco-tourists.

Now on its eighth year, the provincial government has decided to celebrate the festival with "*sili*" (chili) as its theme, for which Bicol has been known. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Phivolcs scientist's remains come home

By Nemesio de la Cruz Jr.
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

URDANETA CITY—The ashes of one of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology scientists killed in a helicopter crash in Nueva Ecija last month were brought to his hometown here on Friday amid a tribute from friends and relatives.

The burnt remains of Dr. Jessie Daligdig, 43, were identified last week through DNA analysis. His remains were cremated after these were properly identified more than two weeks after the April 28 crash on Mt. Namat in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija.

Daligdig's family brought the urn that contained his ashes here on Friday for a two-day wake and tribute by his classmates at the Urdaneta City National High School (UCNHS).

Daligdig, "Lakay" to those close to him, graduated from the UCNHS (formerly Urdaneta Community High School) in 1977.

"Not only we, his batch mates, lost a friend, but all those faceless people who depended so much on people like Jessie who devoted their lives to securing the people by [preparing for] disasters," said Rosenda Salazar, batch president.

When Daligdig died, the school's website started receiving messages of praise and condolences, Salazar said.

Daligdig, who started his career as geologist by mapping out the 1965-1977 eruption deposits at Taal Volcano, was remembered as "down to earth and, at times, temperamental during [his] high school days."

Concepcion Maminta, Daligdig's Algebra teacher, said "Jessie was one who didn't pay so much attention in class but who gave accurate answers" to questions that she would raise.

Councilor Jennylin Sison said she would ask the city council to recognize Daligdig's contribution to public service.

Daligdig's family thanked his friends for the "unknown stories told in phone calls and text messages which made up the pieces of the noble life that Jessie spent."

Amor, his wife, described Daligdig as a very intelligent man.

"*Sobrang talino niya, lagi niya akong pinipikon* (He's very intelligent that he would tease me until I lose my patience). He kept on telling me that I was so gullible," she said.

Daligdig's youngest son, Adriel, 14, thanked his father "for the gift of life."

He said the family was overwhelmed with praises from people who recognized Daligdig's achievements and contributions to government.

Killed with Daligdig in the crash were former Phivolcs chief Dr. Raymundo Punongbayan, three other Phivolcs staff members and four Philippine Air Force personnel.

Suspected meningo case confines family to home

By Romy G. Amarado
PDI Visayas Bureau

SIBULAN, Negros Oriental—A family here was asked to be placed under quarantine following the death of a 3-year-old boy after showing symptoms of meningococcemia.

Mayor Antonio Renacia said the Municipal Disaster Coordinating Council, in a meeting, decided to ask the boy's seven family members to stay inside their home in Barangay Looc here for a week.

Neighbors of the family were also advised not to interact with the family members within that period as a precautionary measure.

Renacia said that during the quarantine period, the Social Welfare and Development Office of Sibulan would provide food for the family members.

The mayor also said the family did not object to the request.

Renacia said doctors of the Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital (NOPH) had suspected that the boy died of meningococcemia on Tuesday night.

Renacia did not identify the doctors but Dr. Bernarda Cortes, technical division chief of the Integrated Provincial Health Office, said the boy was declared dead on arrival at the NOPH.

She, however, clarified that there were no conclusive findings that meningococcemia was indeed the cause of death.

But she said the accounts she received from the boy's relatives would tend to raise suspicion that the boy had suffered symptoms of the disease prior to his death.

Quoting the boy's relatives, Renacia said the boy had high fever Monday last week and died the following day. The body, the mayor said, was immediately buried at the town public cemetery on Wednesday, on orders of the doctors of NOPH.

Meningococcemia is an acute (sudden onset) infection of the bloodstream and subsequent inflammation of the blood vessels with the bacteria *Neisseria meningitides.*

A person suffering from meningococcemia has any of the following symptoms—fever, rashes usually in the arms and legs, headaches, vomiting, stiff neck, seizures, convulsions and changes in the senses.

Meningococcemia can be transmitted by direct contact with an infected person and by droplet spread.

Vice gov seeks probe of 'useless' dams in Bohol

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—There is a need to evaluate the multimillion-peso dams constructed by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) in Bohol for their failure to uplift the livelihood of farmers, according to Vice Gov. Julius Caesar Herrera.

He said the Malinao dam project in Pilar town had failed to live up to its promise to alleviate the lives of poor farmers in the service areas.

The vice governor made the observation after Gov. Erico Aumentado sought the declaration of Bohol as a calamity area due to the prevailing drought that dried up rice lands in at least 22 towns.

"The objective of big dams is to ensure available water supply for rice fields even during the dry season. Unfortunately, the Malinao dam has failed to serve the farmers in Pilar and neighboring towns even when there is sufficient rainfall," Herrera said.

The Malinao dam in Pilar, a project funded by a P1.4-billion loan from the Official Development Assistance of Japan (ODA-Japan), had been operational since 1997.

It was supposed to serve 4,960 hectares of rice lands but so far, it had irrigated only 3,060 hectares.

The farmers had also complained that the Malinao dam had allegedly destroyed at least 1,500 hectares of productive farmlands.

Herrera, provincial board committee chair on agriculture, said the Malinao dam should be an eye-opener to planners of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) so that its failures would not be repeated in the future.

Unfortunately, the Zamora small water irrigation project (SRIP) in Talibon town has suffered a worst fate.

Herrera recalled that the P145-million SRIP has remained a ghost project because of an anomaly during the construction.

Villagers fleeing Army offensive in Quezon town seek park refuge

LUCENA CITY—Afraid of getting caught in the crossfire, about 50 evacuees from a remote village of Lopez town fled their homes and sought refuge at the Perez Park in front of the provincial capitol here for four days last week.

The group decided to end the park encampment last Friday after a protest march around the city and after provincial officials promised to investigate alleged human rights violations by the military in its anti-insurgency operations in the Quezon-Bicol boundary area.

Benjamin Balane, peasant leader from the Kongreso ng Magbubukid para sa Repormang Agraryo (Kompra), said the evacuees, many of them women and children, could no longer bear the anxiety and fear brought by the heavy deployment of Army soldiers in the vicinity of Barangay Sto. Niño Ilaya.

Balane said they expected more residents from the area to evacuate, also after Lopez Mayor Fiden Salumbides allegedly ignored their plight.

"Mayor Salumbides told us that he could not do anything because the place is too far. But we're still his constituents and our area is still part of his jurisdiction," he said.

Balane said the area can be reached through a 30-minute jeep ride and a two-hour hike.

The refugees, bringing with them their pots and pans, slept the night in one corner of the park's playground area.

Balane said they were allowed by the park security guard to stay on the condition that the refugees would fold their streamers condemning militarization.

Maj. Jose Broso, spokesperson of the military's Southern Luzon Command based in Camp Nakar here, confirmed the deployment of government troopers in the area.

"It's not militarization. We're there to protect the villagers," he told the INQUIRER.

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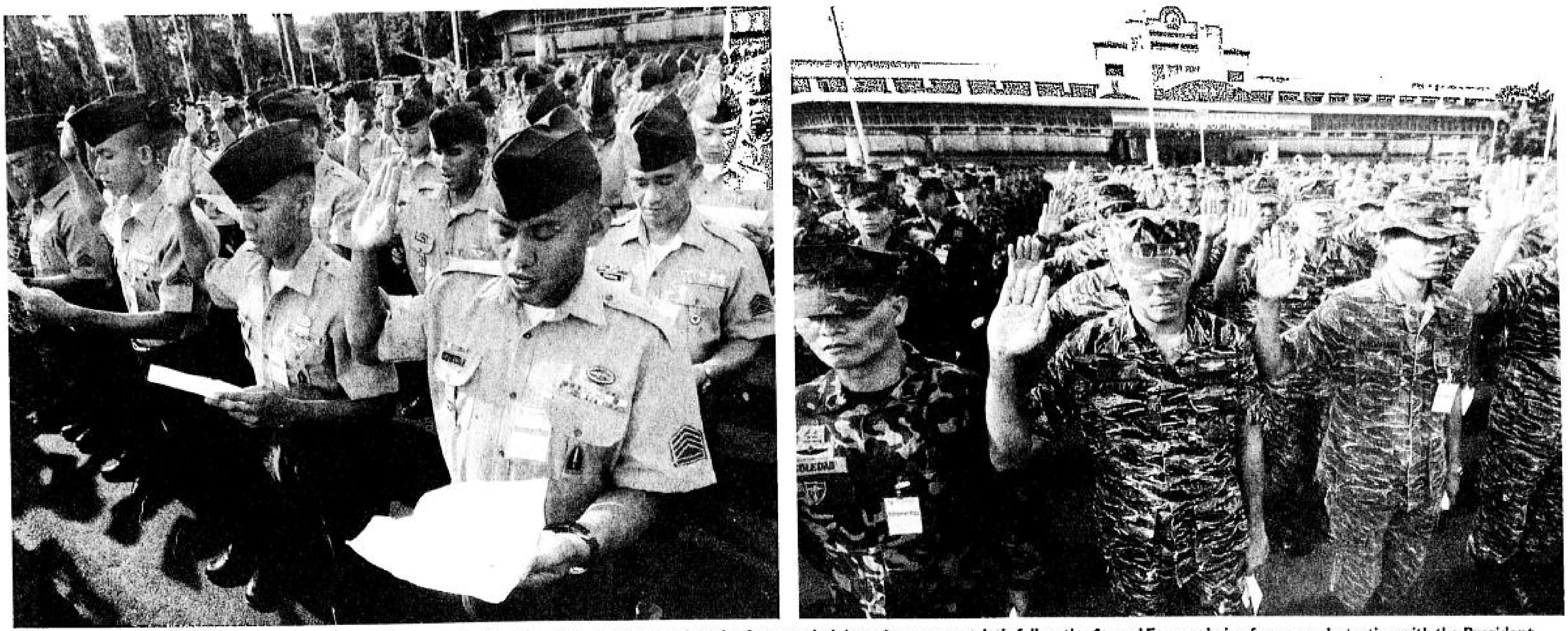

WEARING crisp military uniforms, soldiers who took part in the failed short-lived mutiny against the Arroyo administration vow to strictly follow the Armed Forces chain of command, starting with the President, during a ceremony marking the start of their two-week retraining at Camp Aguinaldo. They read from prepared copies their pledge of allegiance to the Philippine Constitution. About 181 enlisted men were released after spending 22 months in jail.

REUTERS

Oakwood mutineers to return to their units

From page A1

The AFP top brass was angered by an Associated Press photo taken on Friday during the release of the soldiers from detention showing one of them on an M35 truck wearing a mask and raising a clenched fist.

Pascual said the soldier explained he was asked by the AP photographer to pose that way and that he did not mean anything by it.

"This masked soldier must realize that the AFP had been kind to him during his confinement. He received a salary in order for his family to survive. He must even be thankful to the AFP for (giving him) another chance," Pascual said.

"If he has no remorse for what he did, then the AFP is not for him," he added.

3-rank demotion

The enlisted personnel have been punished with a three-rank demotion and forfeiture of two-thirds basic pay for three to six months for joining the short-lived mutiny at the Oakwood Premier Ayala Center.

A decorated Navy SEAL who killed notorious Abu Sayyaf leader Abu Sabaya in 2002 spoke on behalf of the 181 mutineers right after the pledge of allegiance to the Constitution, the law and the duly constituted government during the flag-raising ceremony at the Camp Aguinaldo general headquarters.

"*Asahan ninyong di namin kayo bibiguin* (Be assured we will not fail you)," Chief Petty Officer Lelito Fermin of the elite fighting unit Special Warfare Group (SWAG) read from a prepared statement.

As part of the punishment, Fermin will be demoted three ranks to Petty Officer 3, the equivalent of a sergeant in the Army.

The most senior officials present during the ceremony were Rear Adm. Mateo Mayuga, deputy chief of staff for personnel, and Brig. Gen. Jovenal Narcise, Camp Aguinaldo commander.

The 181 soldiers were temporarily assigned to the Headquarters Support Command (HSC) under Narcise while undergoing a two-week pre-deployment training.

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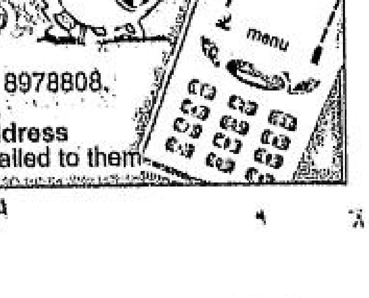


Another reprieve for boardwalk vendors

By Jerome Aning

PHILIPPINE Tourism Authority General Manager Robert Dean Barbers expressed dismay yesterday over a Manila judge's decision to extend the temporary restraining order (TRO) preventing the agency from renovating the Rizal Park boardwalk.

"It is very disappointing that the PTA's plan to build a structure that the country would be proud of and that would boost our tourism industry and help put the nation back on its feet has been delayed," Barbers said in a statement.

The PTA and a group of foreign investors were planning to clear the area behind the Quirino Grandstand of vendors and build a world-class ocean park.

However, Judge Antonio Gutierrez of the Manila Regional Trial Court Branch 47 extended to June 5 the 72-hour TRO earlier granted by Executive Judge Antonio Eugenio Jr.

Barbers said that since he took over as head of the PTA, he had supported the vendors operating in the area in question to improve their livelihood.

"It was very clear that until we found an investor that would improve the boardwalk into a world-class tourist landmark, we helped the vendors by allowing them, based on a verbal agreement, to continue their business," he said.

Barbers said the vendors knew their stay in the area was temporary as they were advised every month that the PTA had a program to rehabilitate the boardwalk.

"We want to improve that site instead of letting it look like an unfinished edifice that is more of an eyesore," he said.

Last month, the PTA helped the government attract foreign investments by convincing China Oceanis Group Ltd. (COGL), a Chinese and Malaysian consortium, to put in some $20 million for the construction of a world-class walk through Oceanarium, the first of its kind in the country, in the boardwalk owned by the PTA.

Barbers added that the PTA was one of the first government agencies to close such a profitable deal with a foreign investor. The court decision could derail the project, he said.

"How can we attract more investors if impediments such as this hurt business confidence?" Barbers asked.

He recalled that President Macapagal-Arroyo even attended the signing of the agreement between the PTA and COGL, a clear sign of support for the project.

Barbers also presented the investment portfolio to the President and showed her the unfinished offshore platform.

The boardwalk had been idle for quite some time after the previous administration spent close to P289 million for this unfinished project, according to Barbers.

The new undertaking, Barbers said, would bring the government from a minimum of $18 million to a maximum of $22 million worth of investments, plus additional annual rentals totaling P16.5 million. Upward adjustments every five years would raise income even further compared to the current gross income of only P2.7 million annually. The PTA also subsidizes the maintenance and upkeep of the boardwalk.

Barbers said the vendors "must keep an open mind on progressive changes that would benefit not just the selected few but the majority of our countrymen."

The plan, according to him, would generate some 2,000 jobs starting from the construction. More locals would also be employed for the day-to-day operation of the Oceanarium, he added. The stall owners claimed the PTA could not drive them away because they had forged a lease contract with the agency.

A boost for local products

By Fran Katigbak

MUNTINLUPA residents who own small-scale businesses have a chance to add to their source of livelihood.

Hoping to widen the market share of distinct "Produktong Muntinlupeño," the city's Joint Resource for the Family (JRF) program has taught food processing to small-scale business owners and provided outlets for the sale of the products.

Those who want to join the program can choose what food items they want to produce, said Public Information Office head Tez Valencia.

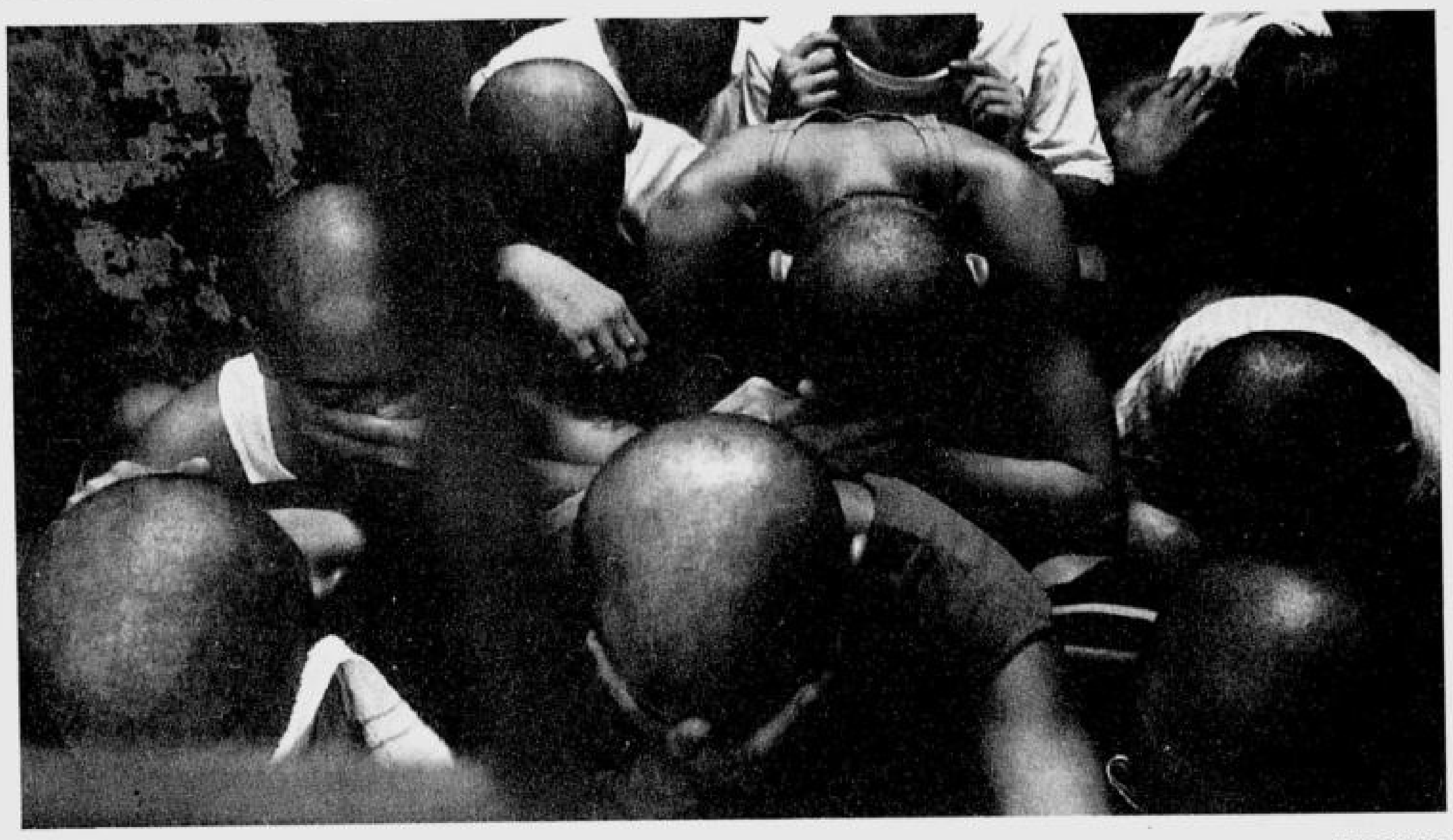
Seven hundred families have joined the program, Valencia told the INQUIRER.

Among the products developed in the barangays are *daing na bangus* in Sucat, *polvoron* made with nonfat milk in Buli, *tocino* and skinless *longganisa* in Cupang, special *yema* in Alabang, *pastillas* in Bayanan, hot and spicy *dilis* in Putatan, soy sauce in Poblacion, and *tinapa* in Tunasan.

Outlets for distribution include festivals and the Alabang Public Market.

The products have earned thousands for its sellers from January to April, with the top four best-selling products bringing in P271,594, according to the JRF accomplishment report.

Promotions for the made-in-Muntinlupa products will end on May 31.



JOAN BONDOC

SUMMER LOOK

INMATES at Police Station 5 along Mariano Marcos Avenue in Quezon City show off their new look to beat the heat.

Teachers, parents rally vs school super

By Fran Katigbak

MORE than 1,000 teachers, parents, school representatives and officials of Taguig and Pateros staged a rally yesterday morning at the Pateros Elementary School and demanded the removal of schools superintendent Rolando Magno.

According to the complaint filed by the Department of Education Taguig-Pateros division on May 13 addressed to DepEd Secretary Florencio Abad, the superintendent had lost the trust and confidence of teachers and school officials because he was inconsistent in his decisions and policies.

The complaint claimed Magno was unfair in hiring and selecting teachers and school officials.

Magno's conflicts with the mayors of Taguig and Pateros had made "linkages and collaboration with the local government units very difficult," it added.

The superintendent was also accused of abusing his discretion on the disbursement of the Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE) fund for public schools.

In 2003, a graft case had been filed against Magno, who was then Parañaque schools superintendent. Businesswoman Lizabeth Carreon claimed Magno had not given her payments for school books she delivered.

Public schools need the support of local governments because of a budget lack in the DepEd, said Dr. Evangeline Ladines, president of the Taguig-Pateros chapter of the Philippine Elementary School Principals' Association.

Recent reports said Taguig's public schools were in danger of losing their electricity and water supplies as the city government had planned on withdrawing its financial support, following the issuance of the MOOE.

The DepEd allowed the schools to demand their legitimate share of the funds for maintenance and operations, including payment of electricity and water bills.

Some 200 people also held a rally outside Pateros Public School to show support for Magno.

More twists in Ramos slay to come

By Tarra V. Quismundo

NEW TWISTS are expected as the investigation into the murder of Assistant Foreign Affairs Secretary Alicia Ramos during a burglary inside her Makati home a month ago continues.

State prosecutors are continuing their investigation of the alleged involvement of the victim's eldest sister in the slay.

The justice department said yesterday new names were likely to be added to the list of suspects, while others would be dropped.

During the first hearing of the case at the Makati Regional Trial Court yesterday morning, Velasco gave this reason in asking the court to defer the scheduled arraignment of Roberto Lumagui, Joel Ablay and Michael Cenil.

New evidence

"Some material evidence had been unearthed by the prosecution which might change the theory on the case," said state prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, the government lawyer handling the case.

Lumagui, Ablay and Cenil were charged with murder and theft after admitting to authorities that they, together with another man identified as Jun Maricar and still at large, staged the April 24 break-in at 5552 Boyle Street, Barangay Palanan, Makati City, where Ramos and her younger sister, Leticia, lived.

Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 147 Judge Maria Cristina Cornejo readily granted Velasco's request, and reset the arraignment to June 21. In the meantime, the three accused would remain in the custody of the National Bureau of Investigation.

Lumagui, an all-around errand boy of the Ramoses, surrendered and confessed to planning the burglary.

But he told authorities the early morning break-in was carried out upon the orders of Ramos' eldest sister, Esther Ramos-Balley, known to be a manic depressive. Lumagui said the attack was meant only to scare the diplomat.

Ramos died when she suffocated under the white cloth the burglars wound tightly around her mouth and nose.

METROBRIEFS

Lanots assured of speedy probe

FORTY days after former Pasig City Rep. Henry Lanot was assassinated, police assured his family they are working hard on the case. "I gave the family an assurance that we are not letting up," said Eastern Police District Director Oscar Valenzuela, who gave the Lanots an update on the status of the investigation on Sunday, the 40th day after Lanot was gunned down inside a Pasig City Restaurant. "I hope the investigation moves at a faster pace," said Ken Lanot, the former congressman's eldest son who had earlier said that the longer the case dragged, the more it became "susceptible to whitewash." Just like his father's supporters, the young Lanot still believes politics was behind the assassination. Lanot ran for mayor last year but lost to Vicente Eusebio. Citing massive vote-buying and early campaigning, Lanot filed a protest case against Eusebio. The case is pending before the Supreme Court. Because Eusebio was abroad during the assassination, his son Councilor Bobby Eusebio quickly denied insinuations they were behind the murder.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Fabella hospital renovation

THE SM Foundation led by Connie Angeles, TV, radio and movie personality and executive director for Health and Medical Programs, spearheaded the drive to renovate the Dr. Jose Fabella Memorial Hospital's pediatrics ward and activity center in ribbon cutting and blessing ceremonies recently with Tessie Sy Coson as guest of honor. SM Foundation donated beds, bassinets and various lifesaving equipment for the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, and also repainted the ward's walls in child-friendly colors. Recently, SM Marketing Communication Group held a Mask Auction to raise funds for charity. The masks were designed by artists and well-known celebrities like Tessa Prieto-Valdez, Heny Sison, Margarita Fores, Charlene Gonzales, Cesar Gaupo, Manny Baldemor, Soler and Malang.

COOL DUDES

FROSTY glasses of 'halo-halo' were in order for (from left) Metropolitan Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando, Muntinlupa City Mayor Jaime Fresnedi and market general manager Gerard Comia to weather the heat wave. Fernando visited the Muntinlupa market which won the Outstanding Healthy Market award from the Department of Health and the "Huwarang Palengke" title from the Department of Agriculture recently.

Not a good day for jeep holdup men

By DJ Yap

SIX SUSPECTED muggers thought it was business as usual when they robbed a jeepney full of passengers before dawn in Quezon City.

They found out too late that two of their would-be victims were cops.

Six male suspects, including two minors, were collared yesterday after trying to rob a Lagro-bound jeepney along Commonwealth Avenue, police said.

Armed with knives, three of the suspects declared a holdup inside the jeepney. The other three started to divest passengers of their belongings, police said.

What the suspects did not know was that two policemen in civilian clothes were among the passengers.

PO2 Emmanuel Lara and PO2 Eric Lazo of the Batasan Police Station suddenly pulled out their service firearms and ordered the suspects to drop to the floor, police said.

The suspects did not resist as Lara and Lazo disarmed them and took them to the Lagro Police Station.

Police identified the suspects as Faisal Gamor, Abduraman Saripada, Orad Minub and Sainnudin Labay. The names of the two minors were withheld.

Legalizing 'jueteng' the only way out

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

AS FAR as I can remember, every administration from the time of Marcos has tried to lick the problem of "jueteng," "masiao" and the Johnny-come-lately "last two."

(Last-two is an illegal lottery where the winning numbers are the last two digits of the legal lotto. It's very popular in Mindanao).

All this time, the government ended up getting licked instead. Whenever there is an uproar against illegal numbers games, their operators they lie low. When the noise dies down, jueteng, masiao and last-two come back with a vengeance.

Jueteng, masiao and last-two gain more adherents or bettors because they get free publicity during the uproar.

And, it's back to normal with everybody happy—local and police officials, as well as congressmen, getting their share of the "intelihensiya" or protection money.

So, how does the government lick the problem of jueteng et. al? Simple. Legalize the games.

The saying, "If you can't beat them, join them" applies all the more to jueteng, masiao and last-two.

During the iron-fisted martial law reign, even the dictator Marcos was not able to stop jueteng and masiao.

During the time of President Cory Aquino, some of her relatives reportedly benefited from jueteng. President Ramos proposed the legalization of jueteng, but nobody in Congress listened.

If the government legalized these illegal numbers games, the No. 1 source of graft in areas where jueteng, masiao and last-two are rampant would be eliminated.

And the government would earn billions in revenues from these operations.

Previous administrations had the same problem when illegal casinos mushroomed at nightclub row in Roxas Boulevard. Law enforcers would raid the casinos which would be closed for two or three days before they reopen, thanks to the protection given by top government officials.

Marcos made a very wise move legalizing the casinos and putting them under the government wing. Now, government-run casinos have sprouted in many parts of the country. They're earning billions of pesos for the government.

Perhaps President Macapagal-Arroyo was just too emotional when she said that under her watch, she would not have jueteng, masiao and last-two legalized. Emotional, because her husband, Mike, and son, Congressman Mikey, had been linked to the latest jueteng scandal.

But Madame President, look at the problem devoid of emotion. You will find that most people in areas where jueteng, masiao and last-two are rampant favor these illegal numbers games. Jueteng, masiao and last-two are the poor people's diversion from the toil of daily life. Their lives become less burdensome because of the entertainment given to them by jueteng, masiao and last-two.

Don't believe some Catholic bishops and anti-gambling advocates who say the poor would be deprived of food on the table because of jueteng. In jueteng, one can place a bet for as low as 25 centavos. Besides, collectors come to their doorsteps to get their bets.

Compare jueteng to lotto, a legal numbers game. In lotto, the minimum bet is P10. And the lotto bettor has to go to a lotto betting station.

If a jueteng, masiao or last-two bettor wins, the collector delivers the money right to his doorstep. In lotto, the winner has to come to Manila if it is a windfall, or go to the lotto station if the prize is small.

If the casinos and lotto were made legal, why not jueteng, masiao and last-two?

METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Ester G. Dipasupil

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NEW NCRPO CHIEF OUTGOING National Capital Region Police Office head Deputy Director Gen. Avelino Razon (left) welcomes new chief, Vidal Querol. VAL HANDUMON

Cops set up task force vs 'jueteng'

By Nancy C. Carvajal

TO REPAIR the damage done by reports that some police personnel are allegedly involved in an illegal numbers game as protectors, an Anti-Illegal Gambling Special Operations Task Force has been created by the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO).

A forceful and unrelenting campaign against the illegal numbers game or "jueteng" should be conducted to correct the impression that jueteng operations are allowed to thrive unhampered because police officials receive payola money from gambling lords, the order said.

Protectors?

"Reports that some police personnel are involved as protectors aggravate the situation and brings down the whole Philippine National Police organization," according to the Letter of Instruction (LOI) signed by Police Supt. Oscar Mariñas of the NCRPO.

The task force, according to the LOI dated May 23, would be primarily dedicated to fighting illegal gambling, particularly jueteng, in Metro Manila.

Aggressive drive

"There is a need to organize a task force that would undertake a more aggressive and sincere campaign to eradicate all forms of gambling, especially the number games," the memorandum stated.

According to newly installed NCRPO chief, Chief Supt. Vidal Querol, he had not seen the memorandum but would support it.

Querol, former chief superintendent in Region 9 (Western Mindanao), took over as the new NCRPO head replacing Police Director Avelino Razon Jr. yesterday.

"I am not aware of this yet, but I have no choice but to act on it," Querol said in a telephone interview when asked if it was his first act as the new NCRPO chief.

Checks and balance

The task force would be headed by the Deputy Regional Director for Operations, and the Chief of Regional Intelligence and Investigation Division as deputy task force commander.

Apart from fighting illegal gambling, the task force would also serve as a checks-and-balance mechanism for derogatory reports against PNP personnel.

NBI card helps same name applicants

By Margaux C. Ortiz

WITH this special card, people with common names would have an easier time getting their clearances from the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco said the NBI Clearance Renewal Card would make the renewal of clearances even more convenient, especially for those living in far-flung regions of the country.

Wycoco said residents of remote areas would benefit from their NBI Clearance on Wheels project, which they launched in Antipolo City last week.

Special teams

The project entailed the deployment of vans in remote and inaccessible regions of the country, where special teams could renew or issue new clearances to residents in a matter of minutes.

But people with unsavory records or those who carry common names similar to those who have existing criminal records would still be required to go to the NBI's regional or satellite offices for clarification.

Common

Wycoco said that about 50 percent of those applying for the issuance or renewal of clearances have common names.

"The NBI Clearance Renewal Card would hopefully solve that problem," Wycoco told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He explained that holders could just present the cards to their clearance processing offices or kiosks and wait a few minutes for the renewal of their NBI clearances.

Lifetime use

The card, which could be used for a lifetime and is available at a minimal fee, contains the facial and fingerprint biometrics of the applicant.

The renewal card will also contain the possible criminal records of the applicant, Wycoco said.

Final OK

The NBI chief added that they are just waiting for the Commission on Audit's final approval of the project.

"This card would be available to everyone within the year," Wycoco said.

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Pinoy tracksters snare 3 Taiwan National Open golds

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan—A three-gold medal haul capped the Philippine team's campaign in the 2005 Taiwan International Athletic Meet which came to a close Sunday at the Kaohsiung County Stadium here.

Sprinter Ralph Waldy Soguilon and long jumpers Henry Dagmil and Marestella Torres ruled their respective events in a positive sign for the country's forthcoming campaign in the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

Soguilon finally achieved a national mark when he teamed up with Alex Gabito, Henry Dagmil and Arnold Villarube to post 40.63 seconds in the 4x100-meter relay.

The clocking was only good for a silver medal but it shattered the RP record of 40.77 seconds set last year by a quartet that also included Soguillon.

Torres and Soguilon actually surpassed the RP marks in their events but they won't be in the record books due to a strong tailwind.

The 26-year-old Torres jumped to a distance of 6.63 meters to surpass the 6.56m record posted by Elma Muros-Posadas in the 1997 National Open and matched by Lerma Bulauitan-Gabito in the Sri Lankan leg of the Asian Grand Prix last year.

Soguilon, the wiry sprinter who was twice denied an RP record in the event due to technical shortcomings by officials, won the 200 meters in a wind-aided 21.26 seconds.

Dagmil jumped to a distance of 7.81 meters in his third try to bag the men's long jump gold. Taiwan's Ko Chi-shung (7.56) and Go Tsi-wai (7.50) settled for the silver and bronze medals, respectively.

"They achieved their target of improving their performances, and they were rewarded for working very hard," said national coach Joseph Sy.

The Filipinos wound up with a 3-2-3 (gold-silver-bronze) tally in the two-day meet featuring 10 countries from the Asian region and a team from the US. *With a report from Marc Anthony Reyes*

Harbour battles Welcoat for 2nd semis slot today

HARBOUR Centre has done the improbable in its maiden campaign.

Thus, coach Caloy Garcia is cautious when his Welcoat Paintmasters battle the feisty Portmasters for the second outright semifinal berth in the PBL Unity Cup today at the Pasig Sports Center.

"When it comes to height and speed, we're evenly matched," said Garcia, whose squad finished with an 8-3 record to tie the Portmasters. "It will all boil down as to who has the heart down the stretch."

The winner in the 4 p.m. match will join early semifinalist Montaña Jewels, who topped the elimination round with a 9-2 record.

The losing team will settle for the twice-to-beat edge when it faces sixth-placer Granny Goose in the quarterfinals.

Defending champion Magnolia Ice Cream and Toyota Otis-Letran will dispute the other twice-to-beat quarterfinal incentive at 2 p.m.

GAMES TODAY
(Pasig Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Magnolia
4 p.m.—Welcoat vs Harbour Centre

Although Harbour Centre dropped its regular-round contest against Welcoat, 81-78, coach Tonichi Yturri believes that his young team has shown maturity in recent matches.

"We learned valuable lessons during our first game (against Welcoat)," he noted. "I told the boys that we have to double our efforts to get back at them."

Yturri said there will only be minor adjustments in the Portmasters' plays, which have been centered on collegiate standouts LA Tenorio, Gabby Espinas and scoring leader Mac Cardona (22.9 points per game).

"We will still use the same game plan but we have to execute our offense better this time around," said Yturri. *Jasmine W. Payo*

MAN TO WATCH: LA Tenorio a vital cog for Harbour Centre. RAFFY LERMA

Peping, GTK pursue Asian hosting bid

By Marc Anthony Reyes

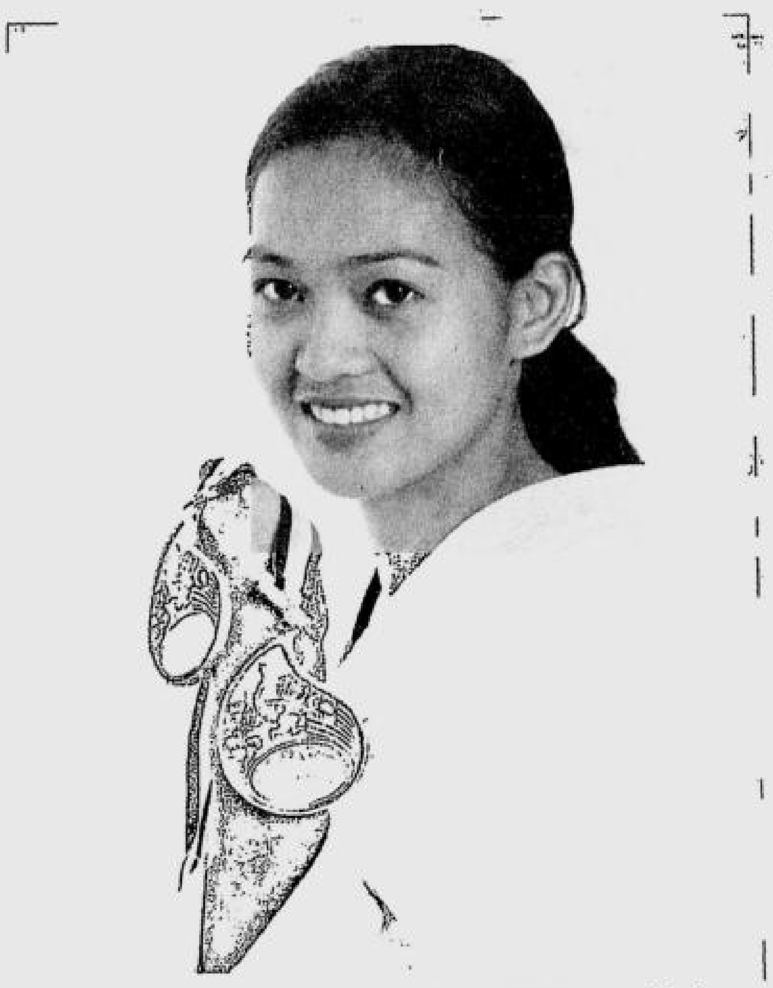
THE BASKETBALL Association of the Philippines may be having a rough ride, but the country's bid to host the Asian men's championships appears to be sailing smoothly.

Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco and his executive assistant Go Teng Kok, the head of track and field and chess, flew to Hong Kong yesterday to meet with Asian Basketball Confederation officials and—among other things—assure them of the Philippines' preparedness to hold the meet here in 2007.

POC sources said Cojuangco and Go will also keep the ABC hierarchy abreast of what's happening in the BAP, which faces suspension from the POC tomorrow when the general assembly convenes.

The BAP has incurred the ire of the 20-member POC executive council for reneging on an agreement with the other major basketball stakeholders regarding the composition of the national team, particularly for the Seaba (Southeast Asian Basketball Association) championship and the SEA Games this year.

Through Cojuangco, the POC executive council has recommended the suspension of BAP, which stands to lose all material support to the association, including funding from the Philippine Sports Commission.


GRETCHEN Malalad, pretty victor in the last SEA Games, adds the gold in the Italy meet to her growing collection of medals. PDI PHOTO

RP karatekas seize 5 gold medals in Italy

THE FIVE-MAN Red Horse Extra Strong Beer-Philippine karatedo team now training in Italy captured five gold and two bronze medals in an international tournament in Termoli City recently.

The tandem of Vietnam Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Gretchen Malalad and Cherli Tugday crushed their rivals from Iran and Romania in the women's team kumite to capture the gold in the competition dubbed *"Giochi dell' Adriatico di Karate"* (Adriatic Karate Competition).

Malalad, also a bronze medalist in the 2002 Asian Games, also prevailed over opponents from Iran and Italy to rule the 60 kg and above women's kumite.

Tugday, likewise a bronze medalist in the Busan Asiad, swept rivals from Italy and Russia to capture the 60 kg gold.

In the men's kumite, Vietnam SEA Games bronze medalist Junel Perania along with up-and-coming Bernardino Chu and Irineo Toribio trounced three Italian teams and a team from India to bag the gold in the competition which drew some 1,000 participants representing 72 karate clubs.

Toribio later prevailed over his Indian and Russian foes to bag the gold in the 60 kg and below men's kumite.

CAGE SHOWDOWN

Ateneo, La Salle aces relive rivalry

By Jasmine W. Payo

EACH one was among the best of his time.

And because their passion for hoop action remains, they will be back to relive the country's most intense collegiate rivalry.

In a rare hardcourt event, Ateneo and La Salle basketball greats will clash in the FilOil-Flying V Ultimate Showdown: Ateneo-La Salle Basketball Classic on July 2 at the Araneta Coliseum.

More than 60 former varsity stars from an era spanning four generations will battle in the Legends (1960s-1980s) and All Stars (1980s-present) matches.

"At stake here are bragging rights," said Chito Narvasa, the stalwart point guard of Ateneo's 1976-1977 championship campaign, during the Eagles' team meeting at Kublai's restaurant on Sunday night.

The La Salle camp will have its own reunion next week for this fund-raising game that will benefit the La Salle Greenhills night school, the La Salle Pep Squad and the Ateneo athletic scholarship fund.

Narvasa, the former Shell tactician and president of the Basketball Coaches Association of the Philippines, will mentor the Ateneo Legends bannered by Jojo Lastimosa, Joy Cleofas, Steve Watson, Chito Afable, Joy Carpio, Felix Flores and Tito Panlilio.

The La Salle Legends, coached by Joaqui Trillo, will be led by Lim Eng Beng, Jong Uichico, Tonichi Yturri, Gabby Velasco, Peter Ley and Edu Manzano.

In the All Stars game, Jayvee Gayoso, Eric Reyes, Larry Fonacier, Gabby Cui, Sandy Arespacochaga and coach Fritz Gaston of Ateneo will collide with Dindo Pumaren, Mac Cardona, Jason Webb, Dwight Lago, Luigi Trillo and coach Virgil Villavicencio of La Salle.

"I didn't get to play with all of them, so this event is tough to turn down," said Gayoso, the former Ginebra standout, who led the Eagles in the 1987-1988 championship.

"This is all for fun," added Narvasa, noting that the last Ateneo-La Salle alumni showdown was held in the late '70s. "Both teams have a good chance of winning. I think it will be all about resistance in the last five minutes."

Club champs golf fires off at Eagle Ridge

By Jong Arcano

GEN. TRIAS, Cavite—Thirty-eight qualifiers from all over the country dispute tickets to the world's two biggest events this year in the inaugural National Tournament of Club Champions presented by HSBC and INQUIRER Golf starting today at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club course here.

There are 20 entries in the men's division and 18 in the ladies' event representing 21 clubs in this launching edition of the tourney held in coordination with the Golf Distributors Association of the Philippines.

Preceding the 8 a.m. tee-off is the brief opening rites and hitting of the ceremonial balls by Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. CEO and president Warner Manning, Philippine Daily Inquirer president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez and Eagle Ridge project director engineer. Wini Gob.

Today's round is an 18-hole qualifying at the Faldo layout with the top 16 players among the men and the top eight ladies making it to the tournament proper the next day.

Thursday is rest day and the event resumes with the ladies' quarterfinals, semifinals and men's quarterfinals on Friday, the ladies' finals and men's Final Four on Saturday and the men's final on Sunday.

The National Tournament of Club Champions is also supported by Omega and Toyota Innova as major sponsors. Minor sponsors are Titleist as the official ball, Aviva Insurance, Printown, GG&A Club Shares, Nike Golf, Mizuno, Ayala Greenfield Estates, Philippine Airlines as the official carrier, Coppertone Sport and Sunbolt Sports Drink.

The men's champion will get a VIP pass to the HSBC World Match Play Championship at the Wentworth Club in Surrey, England this September. The ladies' winner gets the chance to watch Jennifer Rosales and Dorothy Delasin in the inaugural HSBC ladies world match play tilt in New Jersey this coming July.

The losing finalist ends up with a limited Philippine edition Omega watch while the third placer receives a Mizuno golf package. Survivors of the first round will already win a box of Titleist balls of their choice

Bannering the men's field are Alabang's Iggy Clavecilla, Riviera's Raymund Sangil, Sta. Elena's Kevin Tayao and Mt. Malarayat's Abe Avena.

The ladies' cast includes business executives Len Yaptangco of Tagaytay Midlands, Wack Wack's Leana Farrales and Sta. Elena's Lorna Tabuena.

High-flying Gonzales is newest FedEx gem

By June Navarro

THE FIERCEST of rivals during their UAAP days, Renren Ritualo and Wesley Gonzales are now the best of buddies in a team they hope to steer through the turbulent waters of the Philippine Basketball Association.

Their partnership started last week when the ex-La Salle triggerman and the former Ateneo enforcer joined hands to help the FedEx Express surge to the top.

Now the Express are in a situation where they can seize an outright semifinal slot in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Cup.

The Express have actually won four in a row, the last one keyed by Ritualo's overtime-sending triple and Gonzales' career-high 23 points in a 109-106 overtime win over the Coca-Cola Tigers.

Gonzales carried the cudgels for the Express in the early going, hitting 13 points in the first quarter to wipe out a 10-point Coca-Cola advantage. In the extra period, Gonzales canned four points to help his team win.

For his astounding effort, Gonzales was chosen PBA Press Corps Player of the Week.

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ROOTING FOR DEAR BROD: Jennifer Rosales skipped LPGA's Sybase Open to be with brother Gerard on Sunday. ROGER MARGALLO

Obscure veteran from Down Under breaks through

LE VESCONTE: Sweet victory.

By Musong R. Castillo

LIPA CITY—It was the most intimidating group in the 89th Philippine Open.

The 23-strong contingent from Australia included past Asian Tour winners, former Australian amateur champions and World Amateur veterans.

And one obscure, mild-mannered veteran with not much success to speak of—until last Sunday.

Described by his compatriots as "the shortest hitter in this field," Adam Le Vesconte, 34, and with a bulging beer belly, rifled a 6-iron when others were hitting 8- or 9-irons onto Malarayat's daunting finishing hole. Last Sunday, he hit his second shot 15 feet past the flag.

Lights out for a courageous Gerald Rosales, who bravely clung on to contention with a second straight 67, and the limelight on for Le Vesconte, who finally got the sweet taste of victory by winning Asia's oldest national professional championship.

"He (Le Vesconte) deserves to win," Rosales muttered in the press room, his 8-under total just good for a runner-up finish. "But I fought hard and I am proud of the way I played."

Le Vesconte can now chart the course of what has suddenly become a promising career, never mind if he pulled off the win with the Top 24 players in the Asian Tour absent and the course fitting his puny-hitting game.

He won more than P1.7 million in prize money and will not have to think about how to qualify for events because of the two-year Tour exemption that goes with the victory.

For someone who was going nowhere, the road ahead looks to be a smoother ride for this "mate,", who put himself in the company of the great Peter Thompson as an Australian winner of the Philippine Open.

And never will his countrymen in the Asian Tour—well-known or otherwise—be taking him lightly again.

As solid as the kingdom of God

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

IN MOST times, the beauty of golf is more appreciated in the telling than in the watching. You can't watch all 156 players entered in a golf tournament, such as the Philippine Open. Not even on TV. If you are on the golf course, you can only watch, at the most, about a dozen players. That is, if you decide to walk around, tail your favorite players maybe? Otherwise, for you to be able to see all competitors, you can either position yourself at the back of green 9 or green 18. There, you can virtually see them all, particularly the cream of the crop, especially on the last day of competition.

Still, more often than not, you will still jump out of bed the next morning to rush to read the papers. If you saw the action live on the golf course and got some thrill, you hunger for more thrill that you might have missed the day before, which the papers could ultimately provide the day after.

It's been that way always. You've seen the winner, in this case Adam Le Vesconte in the 89th Philippine Open at Mount Malarayat in Lipa City on Sunday (May 22), and still you want to read the papers to know exactly what happened, how it happened and why it happened.

Thus, what happened was Vesconte won behind a final round that was as solid as the kingdom of God, shooting a 7-under-par 64 decorated by 8 birdies. How it happened, the 34-year-old from Queensland, Australia, had the answer: "I stayed focused on my game plan for the day and that is, never to be distracted by anything, not even the birds chirping from the trees." Why it happened, Vesconte, two down at the start of play, had this to say: "I had the feeling I'd win it as early as last night. Two beers had put me to good sleep."

Make that San Miguel Beer.

Pale pilsen, please?

***

The National Club Champions tournament, a tournament put up by the INQUIRER and HSBC set for this week at Eagle Ridge, is another novelty. No bash of this kind has ever been held before.

This tournament is a tribute to our so-called duffers, who never went on to become Tiger Woods. Their passion for the game has made them pursue excellence in the game on another plane, given their situations in life wherein they graduate mostly as either businessmen or leaders in the corporate world.

Yes, they have abandoned dreams of becoming stars of the sport, but their sense of sporting achievement is not lost forever. By being club champions, like Abe Avena of Mount Malarayat, is also something that not only keeps them highly competitive outside of their field of work but also gives them that enviable position of how it also feels to be a champion despite the routine grind far from the fairways.

I was invited by Jong Arcano, that super energetic INQUIRER man for all seasons (he edits the INQUIRER Golf Monthly, and that's just one of his many key positions in the INQUIRER family), to referee the tournament in tandem with Jake P. Ayson. But I had to beg off because my brother, who has been away for nearly two decades, is in town. I had no choice but to accede to be my brother's tourist guide during his visit.

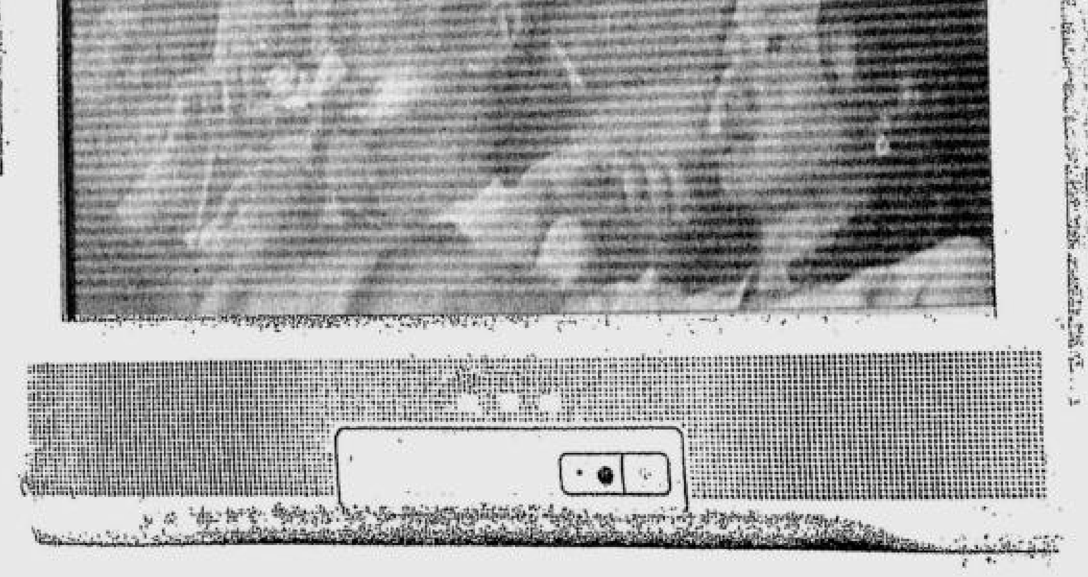
Kuya Pepito, who lives with his family in Missaussaga in Toronto, Canada, since 1987, is an elder brother of mine. So, whatever he requires of me to do, I'll have to follow. Custom, boy, custom. As Topol sang it in the film, "Fiddler on The Roof": "Tradition! Tradition!" You follow your elder's order, period.

That's why after my coverage of the Philippine Open at Mount Malarayat on Sunday, May 22, I had to rush back from Lipa City to Manila and be with Kuya Pepito the next morning in the nostalgia-filled trip to the land of Kuya Pepito's roots: Mangatarem, Pangasinan. Kuya Boni Sison, Kuya Pepito's best friend, has prepared a party for the entourage that also include Kuya Pepito's wife, Ting, and son, Jonas.

From Mangatarem, Kuya Pepito will also retrace his footprints in San Fernando, La Union. It was there that he spent several years of his adolescence after he was taken in by Tata Mariano and Nana Dolor (sister of my father) to their abode by the sea. There, Kuya Pepito lived his growing-up years in the company of our first cousin, Manang Vimin, the extremely generous wife of Manong Cesar. The couple own Cesmin Cottages, a sprawling fiesta of vacation houses at the Pagdalagan beach. Also with Kuya Pepito in that bungalow by the beach was Manong Pidiong, now the humble deputy airport manager at the Naia.

I guess I am justified, Jong, in begging off from my refereeing duties this week? There's always a next time. Thank you for your thoughts.

PAGDAGSA NG MGA KOREANO
Mabuti o dehado tayo?
INQ TV INQ TV INQ TV



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Tuwing Huwebes, 10:30 ng gabi, pagkatapos ng American Idol! Dito lang sa ABC
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Rodrigo goes up against wily Manatad

FORMER Philippine flyweight champion Edgar Rodrigo stakes his lofty ranking today when he battles RP No. 4 junior bantamweight Sherwin Manatad at the Trece Martirez City town plaza.

Rodrigo, a native of Gen. Santos City, is slightly favored against the wily and tough Manatad of Misamis Oriental in their 10-round encounter which serves as an elimination fight for the OPBF flyweight crown.

Rodrigo won against Thailand's Surapol via a first-round knockout on Jan. 29 at the Casino Filipino before beating Flash Sambajon on points in Tagaytay City a month later.

Promoter Jun Sarreal expects a banner crowd, led by Trece Martirez Mayor Melencio de Sagun Jr., to see the free fight card, which starts at 4 p.m. and is part of the city's anniversary commemoration of the 13 Martyrs of Cavite.

In the other main event, Dondon Lapuz trades punches with Al Deliguer for the vacant PBF lightweight title over 10 rounds.

MIKASA
MIKASA
MIKASA
UST
12

VENUS Bernal of Santo Tomas rises for a deft placement shot.

UST spikers back on track, rip FEU

DEFENDING champion University of Santo Tomas bucked the absence of Joyce Pano to blast Far Eastern University, 25-19, 25-14, 25-12, yesterday and get back on track in the 2005 Shakey's V-League first conference at the Rizal Coliseum.

Roxanne Pimentel came out of a slump by pumping in 18 hits she highlighted with 12 kills and two blocks while Mary Jean Balse fired 15 points that more than made up for the absence of Pano, who was out for the second straight game to mourn the loss of a family member.

"The team really missed Joyce (Pano) but it's a nice thing that we still pulled out this one," said UST coach August Sta. Maria, referring to the power-hitting utility spiker, who was a key figure in the España-based team's title romp in last year's edition of this event sponsored by Shakey's Pizza.

The victory somehow erased the stigma of their shocking loss to the Ateneo Lady Eagles, 25-21, 22-25, 17-25, 25-18, 11-15, Saturday. The Tigresses also dropped their first game to the San Sebastian Lady Stags, who rallied from a set down to sweep the next three.

San Sebastian kept the momentum of its back-to-back wins over UST and FEU and survived a tough Lyceum side, 25-16, 28-26, 25-20, to regain a share of the lead with idle La Salle with 3-0 slates. Lyceum fell to 0-4.

For a while, the Tigresses appeared sluggish, perhaps reeling from their previous loss and groping for form in the absence of Pano. But they recovered their bearing late in the opening set then went on to finish off their rivals for their second win in four games in this tournament backed by Accel, Mikasa, Jemah Television and IBC 13.

Pimentel, surprisingly playing below par in the first three games, alternated with Balse, last conference's MVP, in the next two sets to complete the rout that lasted just a little more than an hour.

GAMES THURSDAY (*Rizal Coliseum*)
3 p.m.—Ateneo vs San Sebastian
5 p.m.—Lyceum vs FEU

Spring-Laguna quintet off to Taiwan for invt'l caging

HIGHLY rated NBC (National Basketball Conference) team Spring Cooking Oil-Laguna flies to Taipei today to compete in the Kwan Hu Club Invitational Cup tournament which starts tomorrow.

The well-balanced squad of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Laguna Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro takes a PAL jet at 3:30 p.m. for Taiwan's capital en route to Hwalin, site of the five-day tourney.

The Filipinos open their campaign at 5 p.m. tomorrow against leading Taiwanese club Eastern Network. Also featured are two teams from Japan and Korea and four other Taiwanese squads.

Nature's Spring, official water of NBC, is sponsoring the team.

"We are honored to support Spring-Laguna in its bid to boost the country's basketball image," said Nature's Spring Mineral Water vice president for sales/marketing Rey Sangalang.

NBC regional sales manager Cipriano "Pinong" Galo thanked Nature's Spring for its support.

The team is beefed up by BAP-RP training team players Mel Latoreno, KG Canaleta, Dennis Madrid, Samique Eman, Don Villamin and Richard Melencio as well as American Geremy Robinson, a 6-foot-3 gunner who averaged 36 points in the 13th ABC Champion's Cup in Malaysia three years ago.

Other members of the team to be coached by Boysie Zamar and Vic Sanchez are Chris Corbin, Rodel Manuel, Mar Reyes, Marlon Kalaw and Robin Mendoza.

Meanwhile, Far Eastern Insurance-backed Cavite gave the visiting Iligan Crusaders a rude welcome with a lopsided 94-81 victory in the 2005 Panasonic-NBC national championship Sunday at the train-drenched Tagaytay Sports Complex.

Mayor Lawrence Cruz's Crusaders stayed within striking distance, 21-22, after the first quarter.

But skipper Stephen Mopera waxed hot to propel the Insurers of Bacoor Vice Mayor Edwin Malvar and Gov. Ireneo "Ayong" Maliksi to a 47-38 halftime cushion, which they held until the end.

The Insurers leveled their record at 2-2 in the tourney.

The scores:

CAVITE 94—V. Santos 22, Mopera 21, Sierra 18, Panares 17, Valdez 9, Plodo 4, Finuliar 2, Nunez, Santiago 0, Altunaga 0, Camanyag 0.

ILIGAN 81—Roque 14, Kong 10, Cavan 9, Ayodelle 8, Torio 7, Fajardo 7, De Guzman 6, Faustino 6, Reyes 5, Sagad 4, Oliveros 3, Bangloy 2, Canoy 0, Baguio 0.

Quarters: 22-21, 47-38, 75-61, 94-81

RP fighters topbill TM Vizcaya card

THE TOUCH Mobile Go for Gold program of the Amatuer Boxing Association of the Philippines goes north to Nueva Viscaya on Tuesday when 11 bouts among the members of the RP Boxing team are held in front of the Provincial Capitol starting at 7 p.m.

The main feature of the province's celebration of the Panagyaman festival includes three women fights. The boxing card is hosted by Gov. Luisa Cuaresma and board member Teoderico Padilla.

Taiwan International Boxing Championships medalists Annie Albania of South Cotabato and Jennifer Pecking of the University of Baguio will clash in the flyweight division, Philippine Navy's Angelita Bautista and Jouvilet Chilem of UB will tangle in the bantamweight class and Jhoren dela Rosa of FEU and Ronjie Sofla, also of UB, will collide in the featherweight category.

``This will be part of the continuing ratings and performance test for the candidates of the RP boxing team for the coming Southeast Asian Games," said Abap president Manny T. Lopez.

The men's bout will be a star-studded affair with Juanito Magliquian of the Navy battling Albert Pabila of Bacolod City in a pinweight clash.

The card, sponsored by Touch Mobile, Accel, and Pacific Heights, will be shown on NBN 4 every Saturday fromm 7-8:30 p.m.

San Beda Law golf starts at Valley tomorrow

THE SAN Beda Law Golf Club Inc. holds its Lambda Rho Beta Cup on May 25 at the Valley Golf and Country Club executive course in Antipolo, Rizal. Tee-off time is from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Club president Plaridel J. Bohol II said his group's May tournament will raise funds for the San Beda legal aid bureau which helps indigent litigants.

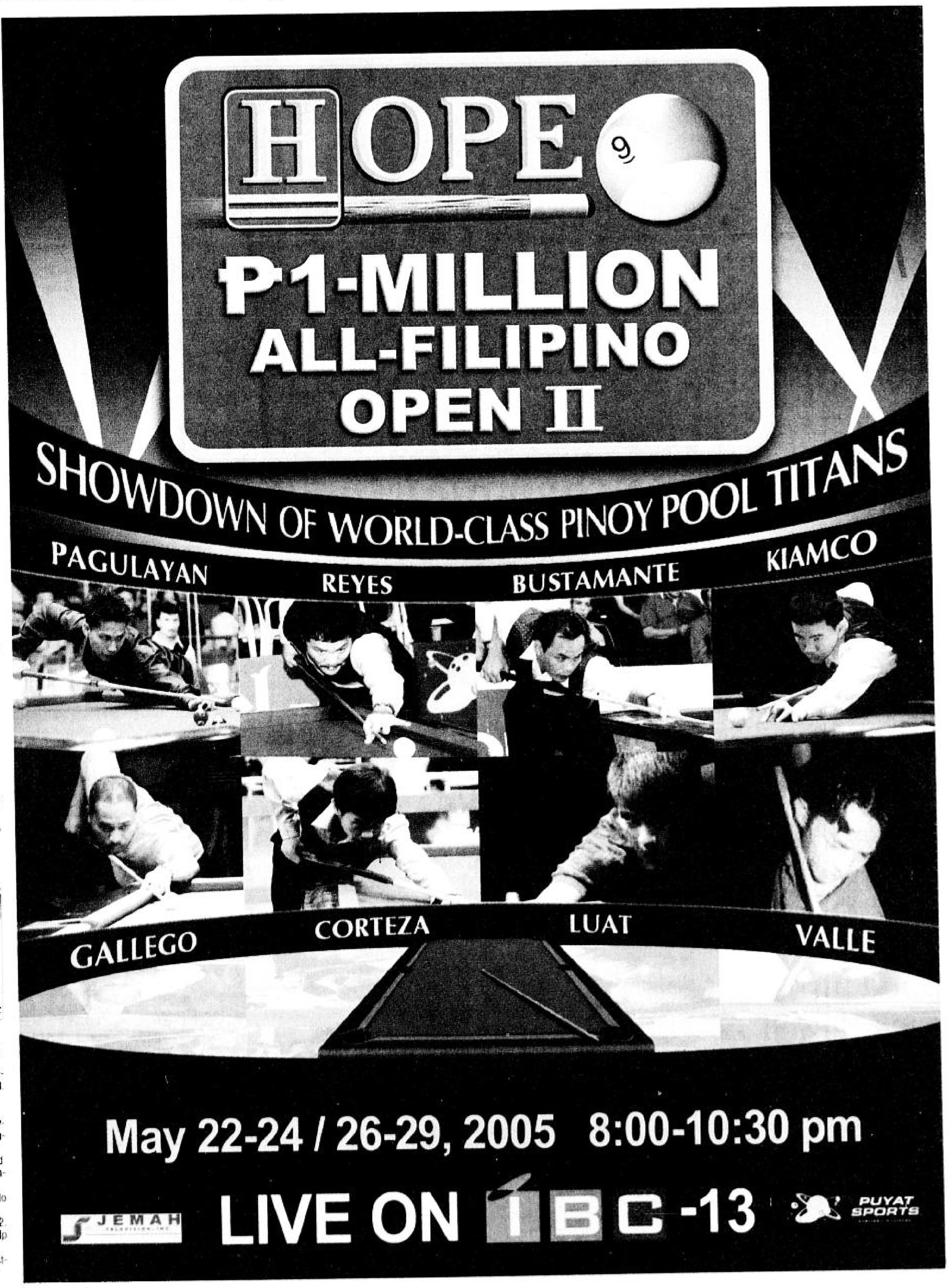
Tournament director Raoul Creencia expects more than 50 players to vie for top honors. Registration starts at 9 a.m.

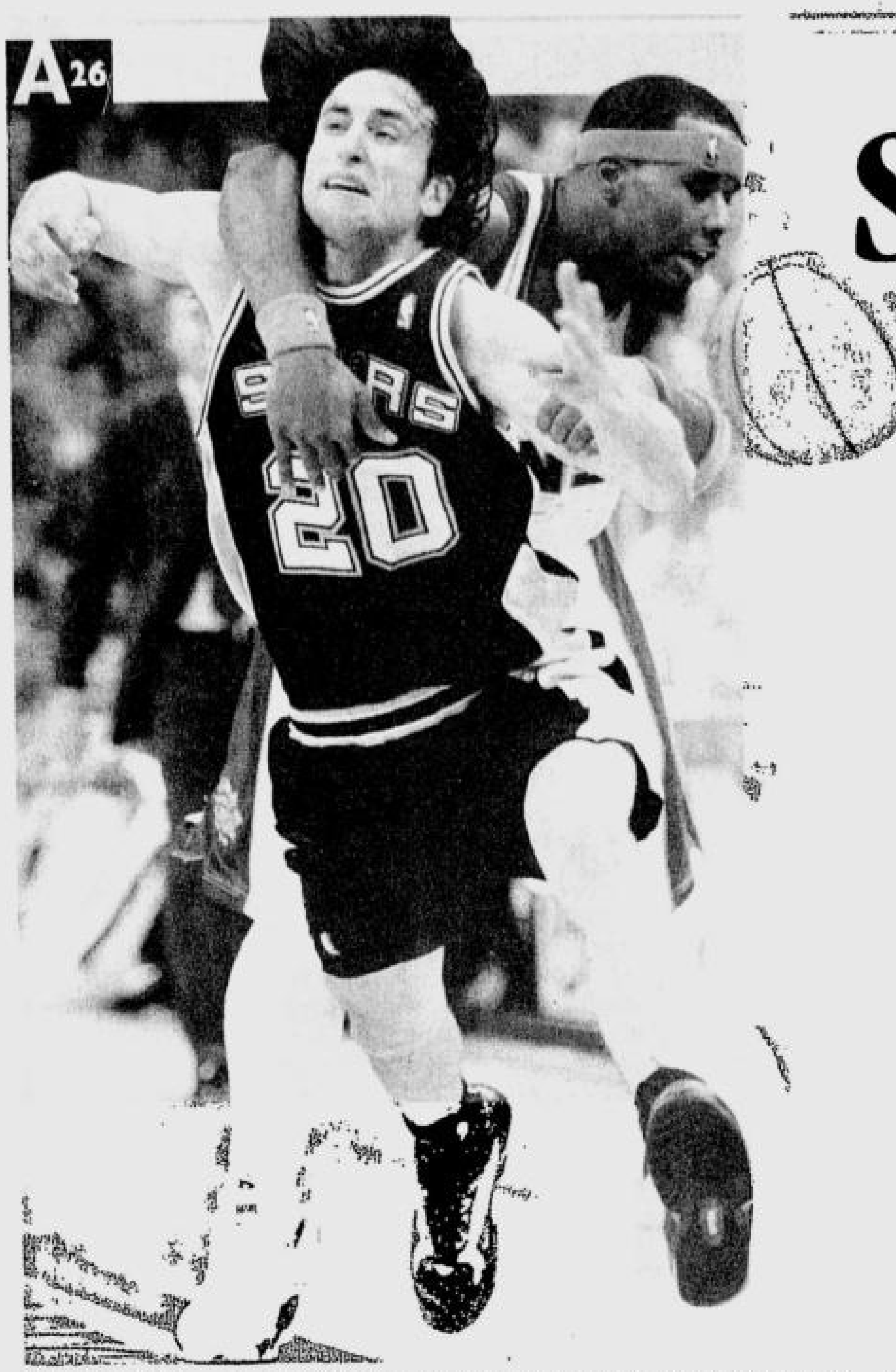
The tournament is sponsored by Globe Telecoms Inc., Winlink Travel Services, Hacienda Grill and Soniare Spa, among others. All participants are encouraged to wear red and white golf shirts.

RACING TIPS

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Patago 2. Court General 3. Juan Marco 4. Seniority 5. Lord Brian
Race 2—1. Triple Seven 2. Premiere Act 3. Super Dancer
Race 3—1. Best Strike 2. Ingay Ingay 3. Key Element 4. Amaretta 5. Radiant Star 6. Gonzee
Race 4—1. Suppressed 2. Foreign 3. Glamour 4. Alexi's Magic
Race 5—1. Loving Thunder 2. Elusive Quest 3. Coat of Arms 4. I Miss You
Race 6—1. War Hero/Flying Jordan 2. Sir Brendan Jean 3. Desirable 4. Native Land
Race 7—1. Amazing Firenze 2. Dow Jones 3. Farragut's Order 4. Hello Junior 5. Well Noted
Race 8—1. Valid Hazm 2. Don't Tell Me 3. Skip Away 4. Morning Glory 5. Fastteller 6. Tiger Winn





THE SPURS' Manu Ginobili (20) gets clotheslined by the Suns' Quentin Richardson. AP

Sharp Spurs eclipse Suns, take Game 1

Barry steps up big with three crucial triples

PHOENIX, Arizona—Brent Barry scored 13 of his 21 points in San Antonio's sizzling fourth quarter here Sunday as the Spurs beat Phoenix 121-114 in their NBA Western Conference finals opener.

Tony Parker scored 29 points and Tim Duncan had 28 and 15 rebounds for the Spurs, who scored 43 points on 72 percent shooting in the fourth quarter and wrested home-court advantage from the NBA's best team. The Suns host game two on Tuesday.

"Not a situation we expect to be in, scoring that many points in the fourth quarter, but an opportunity we'll take," Duncan said.

"We can play a couple of different ways," Barry said. "We can play big and slow and methodical. We also can run and compete with the best team in the West, and that's Phoenix."

Barry, quiet the entire postseason, stepped up big in the final period by making three three-pointers and all five of his shots.

He made back-to-back shots from the arc 39 seconds apart to cap a 12-4 surge and give the Spurs a 106-98 lead with 4:08 remaining.

"It is all predicated on Tim being down in the block and scoring, causing problems," Barry said. "There is so much focus down there when they double team him it leaves avenues for open opportunities to do your best to knock things down."

"He (Barry) came up huge," Parker said. "I am very happy for him because he's been struggling the whole season. He played great tonight. I hope he's going to keep it going because we need him."

When Barry wasn't bombing away from the outside, Parker and Duncan also proved too difficult to handle.

Parker used his quickness to his advantage, going to the basket to both score and set up Duncan, who looked very much like a two-time Most Valuable Player.

Amare Stoudemire overcame early foul trouble and scored 41 points and reigning MVP Steve Nash had 29 and 13 assists for the Suns, who trail in a series for the first time this postseason.

"It was defensive breakdowns more than anything," Nash said. "I think we scored enough points to win and played well enough offensively." While the Spurs scored when they wanted, they also showed why they were the NBA's best defensive team during the regular season, limiting the Suns to just six fast-break points.

Phoenix had been averaging 19.5 fast-break points in the postseason.

"No fast-break points the whole night," Suns coach Mike D'Antoni said. "I don't think we had enough energy that we could get over the hump." After being contained in the first half, the Suns came out energized in the third quarter, using a 21-9 run in just under five minutes to take a 70-64 lead. Jim Jackson drilled three three-pointers in the surge that Stoudemire capped with two free throws at the 6:53 mark.

Jackson scored 20 points on 8-of-16 shooting and also made four of the Suns' six three-pointers.

All-Star Shawn Marion made two foul shots with 90 seconds left in the third quarter, giving the Suns their biggest lead at 82-74.

But it was a completely ineffective game for Marion, who scored just three points on 1-of-6 shooting. *AFP*

Shaq still ailing as Heat open series vs Pistons

MIAMI—Each of the diamonds in Shaquille O'Neal's three championship rings are authentic.

These days, he feels like a fake.

Now five weeks into his battle with a bruised right thigh, O'Neal's confidence and productivity are well off their usual playoff levels. And no one, not even O'Neal himself, knows what he'll be able to do when the Heat open the Eastern Conference finals Monday night in Miami against the defending NBA champion Detroit Pistons.

"I'm used to being the good-looking Shaq," O'Neal said Sunday after sitting out practice to rest his leg. "Anything that doesn't look good is not worth looking at."

The Heat hope some of Shaq's luster begins getting restored in Game 1 against the Pistons, who are in the East finals for the eighth time since 1987. It's just the second trip to this playoff round for Miami, which was ousted in five games by Michael Jordan's Chicago Bulls in 1997.

Detroit has a champion's swagger and confidence. But Heat center Alonzo Mourning, the only holdover from the 1997 squad and the presumable replacement if O'Neal struggles, says his team should also feel good about its chances.

"They're a good team. They're the champions. But they can be beat," Mourning said.

The Pistons didn't fear O'Neal when they faced his Los Angeles Lakers in last year's NBA Finals.

No one is quite certain what scheme Pistons coach Larry Brown will employ most against O'Neal in this series. But double-teams probably won't be used until O'Neal—who averaged 18 points and 8.2 rebounds in the first two playoff rounds, well off his usual numbers—proves he's healthy enough to warrant one.

Detroit won two of the three regular-season meetings, including an 80-72 win in Miami on April 10—a game O'Neal missed with a stomach virus. So, the Pistons dogged every move Dwayne Wade and Damon Jones made in that game.

Wade has sizzled since. In his 12 games following that game, Wade's averaged 26.8 points, 7.2 assists and 6.3 rebounds.

"I'm motivated because it's the Eastern Conference finals," Wade said. *AP*

SHAQUILLE O'Neal (left) talks to coach Bob McAdoo after shooting free throws Sunday. AP

Perry runs away with Colonial title

FORT WORTH, Texas—American Kenny Perry cruised to a seven-stroke victory at the $5.6-million PGA Colonial, but a double bogey on Sunday's penultimate hole kept him from breaking his own tournament record.

Perry fired a one-under par 69 to match his 72-hole mark at 19-under 261 and join Tiger Woods, Vijay Singh and Phil Mickelson as the only multiple winners on the US tour this season. Perry also won the Bay Hill Invitational in March.

"I just wanted to win again," Perry said. "I wanted to get my name on the wall. It was a fun round of golf."

The ninth career victory for Perry was worth $900,000.

Billy Mayfair fired a 69 to finish second on 268, one stroke ahead of Australia's Peter Lonard and Americans David Toms and Joe Durant.

Seven others shared sixth on 270 including. Rory Sabbatini and Rod Pampling, Bernhard Langer, Scott Hend and Aaron Baddeley and Tim Petrovic and Brandt Jobe. *AFP*

Teener Creamer youngest LPGA champion in 50 yrs

CREAMER

NEW ROCHELLE, New York—Paula Creamer holed a 15-foot birdie putt on the final hole to win the Sybase Classic by one stroke on Sunday and become the second-youngest first-time winner on the LPGA Tour.

The 18-year-old former amateur star closed with a one-under 71 on the tough Wykagyl Country Club course, including three birdies in her last five holes. She finished with a six-under 278.

Marlene Hagge won the Sarasota Open in 1952, just 14 days after her 18th birthday.

Creamer, who finished second in the ShopRite Classic last year as an amateur, is 18 years, 9 months.

The $187,500 winner's share from the $1.2 million purse is almost $20,000 more than Creamer won in her eight starts this year.

Jeong Jang (67) and 2002 Sybase champion Gloria Park (71) tied for second at 279, one shot in front of Christina Kim (73), who led or shared the lead after each of the first three rounds. Heather Bowie (72) and Joo Mi Kim (73) finished another shot back at 281. *AP*

RAIKKONEN gets a champagne spray after the Monaco win. REUTERS

In-form Raikkonen makes it pole to pole

MONACO—McLaren's Kimi Raikkonen led the Monaco Grand Prix from start to finish on Sunday to win Formula One's most glamorous race and turn the heat on championship leaders Renault.

Wearing a diamond-encrusted helmet, the Finnish "Iceman" celebrated his second win in a row while Renault's title frontrunner Fernando Alonso was chased home in fourth place with his rear tires almost gone.

Germany's Nick Heidfeld was runner-up for Williams, with Australian teammate Mark Webber third for his first podium placing.

Ferrari's Michael Schumacher, his team still without a victory this season after winning 15 of last year's 18 races, finished seventh.

The day belonged to Raikkonen, whose fourth career win moved him up to second in the championship.

Alonso has 49 points to 27 for Raikkonen and 26 for Italian Jarno Trulli. Renault lead the constructors' standings with 63 to McLaren's 51 and Toyota's 43. *Reuters*

Dodd turns back Howell

MAYNOOTH, Ireland—Britain's Stephen Dodd won his second European Tour title of the season by beating compatriot David Howell in a playoff for the Irish Open on Sunday, Howell's second shootout disappointment in a week.

The 38-year-old Welshman, who won the season-opening China Open, birdied the first extra hole—the par-five 18th.

The pair had completed 72 holes at 279, with Dodd scoring a 68 and Howell a 70. *Reuters*

Matsui, Williams deliver for NY Yankees

NEW YORK—After Pedro Martinez dominated his old nemesis, Hideki Matsui and Bernie Williams rallied the New York Yankees to a 5-3 victory over the Mets in the first Subway Series of the season on Sunday.

After Pedro Martinez dominated his old nemesis, Hideki Matsui and Bernie Williams rallied the New York Yankees to a 5-3 victory over the Mets in the first Subway Series of the season on Sunday.

Matsui tied the score with a two-run single off Roberto Hernandez and scored on a double by Williams as the Yankees took advantage of two eighth-inning errors.

The Yankees took two of three at Shea Stadium with the help of the Mets' shoddy defense.

Martinez left with a 3-1 lead after seven sterling innings. *AP*

Other Major League results: Cubs 4, White Sox 3; Red Sox 5, Braves 2; Royals 9, Cardinals 2; Phillies 7, Orioles 2; Nationals 9, Blue Jays 2; Rangers 2, Astros 0; Marlins 8, Devil Rays 5; Indians 9, Reds 2; Twins 6, Brewers 5, 11 Innings; Dodgers 6, Angels 2; Mariners 5, Padres 0; Diamondbacks 1, Tigers 0; Giants 3, Athletics 1.

SPORTSWATCH

Burlington renews ties with PBA

BURLINGTON Industries Phils. Inc, the leading hosiery firm, was lauded by players and their parents, coaches and PBA officials for renewing its commitment to the Philippine Basketball Association Junior League. Now on its second year, the partnership between Burlington, the socks authority, and the PBA hopes to discover young Patrimonios, Codiñas, Millers, and Ildefonsos that can be the country's cage heroes in the future. "Thanks to Burlington, I can proudly wear the jersey of Red Bull and play at venues like Araneta Coliseum," said Reymel Neri, a 12-year-old kid from Parañaque-Red Bull team. "We congratulate Burlington for supporting this project. Now my son has something worthwhile to do this summer," quipped Monique Lao, mother of Nikko of San Mateo-TNT squad. "This tournament is a good exposure to the boys. We are glad Burlington and the pro league came up with this summer league," commented Aldrin Morante, coach of Parañaque-Red Bull. According to Commissioner Normal Black and project director Perry Martinez. without the generous support of Burlington, the boys won't have this rare opportunity to strut their wares every summer. Burlington is also the official PBA socks.

8 RP extreme bets to Seoul

EIGHT of the best extreme athletes in the land including Pinoy skateboard hero Ansey Flores-Castañeda is invited to compete in the prestigious Asian X Games in Seoul, South Korea on May 23 to 29. The event is the qualifying round for the US X-Games. Castaneda hopes to win the gold this year in order to advance in US. He won bronze medal in skateboarding Main X twice in this event, reports that he is in tip top condition, training hard along with the invited athletes. Among the athletes who are invited for the games are Armand Mariano and Jorge Baquir of BMX Stunts Park, Pedro Santos and June Castor of Skataboard Park, Totong Yangco and Willy Bolado of Aggressive In-Line Raymond Pingol and Jojo Sanchez of BMX stunt Flatland. All athletes except for Castañeda are winners of the Red Horse Beer Super X Series organized by Urge magazine, Rekta Productions and Sport Management Inc. last year. Red Horse Beer and Urge Magazine will sponsor their airfare.

Graphic Golf Classic June 2

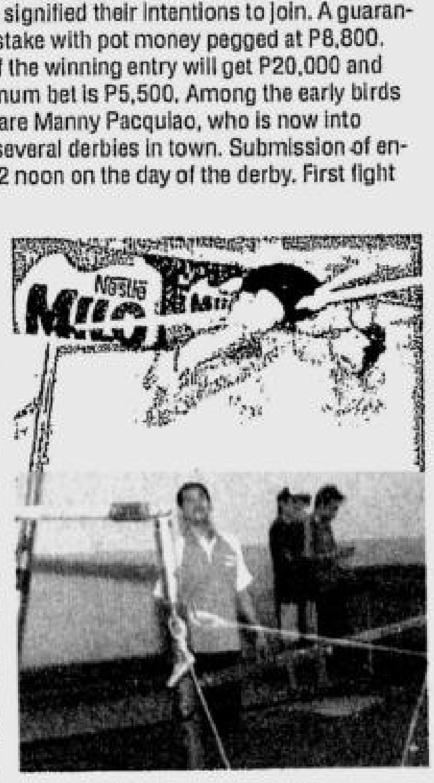
PHILIPPINE Graphic Publications Inc. will host the very first Philippine Graphic Golf Classic on June 2 at the West Course of the exclusive Wack Wack Golf and Country Club, Mandaluyong City. The tournament will gather business leaders and executives in a game of camaraderie and excellence in the fairways. A Hyundai Getz awaits the hole-in-one winner. PGPI publishes Philippine Graphic News Weekly Magazine, Mirror: The Healthy Lifestyle Magazine and Cook: The Culinary Lifestyle Magazine. For inquiries, call Louie Jon Sanchez at 814-0134.

NREA President's Cup reset

THE 17TH Annual Chairman's & President's Cup golf tournament of the National Real Estate Association (NREA) has been moved to June 17, from June 3, still at the Kagilingan Golf Club, Fort Bonifacio, Makati City. This was announced by Juan P. Concepcion Jr., NREA sports czar and vice president for business development. He also informed that some 70 participants are expected to play in this tournament to be held in honor of NREA founding chair, Jose V. Manalad; and NREA national president, architect Nestor S. Manglo. NREA golf tournament director, Ross B. Balanza, said that vice president Noli de Castro will lead the hitting of the ceremonial ball. For particulars, contact NREA Secretariat at tels. 912-3492 or 913-4463.

Battle of champions at Elorde Cockpit

THIS much awaited 4-cock derby Battle of Champions will unfold at the New Elorde Cockpit Stadium on Tuesday, May 24th. Promoted by businessman/sportsman Johnny Elorde, this Battle of Champions is one of the biggest derby that will be held this month considering that almost 70 entries have already signed up. All those who became champions during the past derbies have signified their intentions to join. A guaranteed prize of P300,000 is at stake with pot money pegged at P8,800. The handler and the gaffer of the winning entry will get P20,000 and P10,000, respectively. Minimum bet is P5,500. Among the early birds who submitted their entries are Manny Pacquiao, who is now into breeding cocks and joining several derbies in town. Submission of entries will be from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on the day of the derby. First fight starts at 7 p.m.



MILO PROGRAM: Young gymnastics enthusiasts get a chance to learn the sport in the Milo summer program. Venues for the Milo program are Club Gymnastica (Makati, Pasig and Malarayat Batangas branch), Club Gymnastica (School of St. Anthony, Lagro, Fairview), Colegio de San Agustin, Dasmariñas Village, Rizal Sports Complex, Provincial Capitol Compound, Shaw Boulevard and St. Paul Pasig. For inquiries, call 635-2553 or 843-9998 loc. 413.

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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

NEW telenovelas and fantaseryes have been making their debut on TV these past weeks. First to make its bid was "Encantadia," an all-fantasy production that banks heavily on special effects, lavish production design and tale of high fantasy-adventure.

After a while, however, the new GMA production's excitement valve was quickly dissipated by its rather predictable storytelling, about different kingdoms of creatures either protective of or determined to grab possession of some symbolic gems.

The initially impressive production design has also turned out to be too much of a mishmash of periods and styles to effectively create a focused and comprehensible universe for the fantasy series.

Another distraction is the show's "crowded" casting, with too many characters being introduced early in the story for viewers to follow—and more importantly, to relate to. A more sequential introduction of characters would have made for less hectic and challenging viewing.

But we must compliment the production for some of its manually or electronically animated creatures, which give the show an appropriately high-tech and sci-fi look.

We trust, however, that succeeding telecasts will pay more attention to storytelling, which needs to be more inventive and empathetic to avoid being upstaged by all those special effects flourishes.

Visual gloss and excitement are fine, but they shouldn't steal the show away from its proper focal points, its empathetic conflicts and characters. All else is eye candy.

Vonzell's out

SOME weeks on "American Idol," **Vonzell Solomon** was praised by a juror for being the singing tilt's "most improved" finalist. But that rave didn't prevent her from being eliminated last Thursday, leaving the fight for the top plum to **Carrie Underwood** and **Bo Bice**.

Last Wednesday, it was Bo who came up with the most impressive renditions (each of the remaining finalists sang three songs), so he could romp off with the title this Thursday. But not without a big, determined, go-for-broke challenge from Carrie!

The "final-finalists" fans will also be in there cheering—and, more importantly, text-voting! We hear that, last Wednesday, some 37 million text-votes were called in by Bo, Carrie and Vonzells' fierce loyalists. This week, that total could go up to 40 million!

Some weeks ago, it was revealed that voting was so close between the remaining finalists that only one percentage point separated the top three bets. With only Carrie and Bo left, that narrow spread can be expected to expand.

And the winner is—? Frankly, both Bo and Carrie would make good American Idols, and even the second-placer between them won't be an also-run, because the two remaining finalists have proved their stellar potential—with or without the benefit of an official title.

'Gangland Lemurs'

INHABITING one of the most inhospitable parts of Madagascar, lemurs cannot be found anywhere in the would. But these stunning creatures face an uncertain future, as they are hunted for food and their forest home is being whittled away.

On Saturday, May 28 at 8 p.m., Animal Planet visits the lemurs' lair in "Animal A-Z: Gangland Lemurs." The episode profiles Jezebel, a powerful, ruthless bully, who has been the leader of her lemur group for years. But the gang is surrounded by neighboring bands that want a slice of the many tamarind trees in her territory.

By successfully routing her neighbors, Jezebel hopes to retain her leadership and maintain the respect of the sisterhood.

Summer sizzlers

MONSTER Radio RX 93.1 presents the Monster Movie Premiere of the new animated blockbuster, "Madagascar" for family audiences at Robinsons Galleria 6 at 3 p.m. on May 27. And, at 4 p.m. on May 29, the Sugarfree band takes center stage at SM City North Edsa's The Garden for the RX Concert Series at the Mall.

Nicholson buys Brando's home

LOS ANGELES—Hollywood superstar Jack Nicholson has bought the home of his late friend and neighbor Marlon Brando for $5 million, according to reports.

The Oscar-winning star of films including "The Shining" and "One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest" snapped up the hilltop property in Beverly Hills that went on the market after Brando died in July at the age of 80.

Brando's 12-room home was built in 1954, with three bedrooms and four bathrooms spread over more than (3,000 square feet), according to the Los Angeles Times and the movie database IMDB.

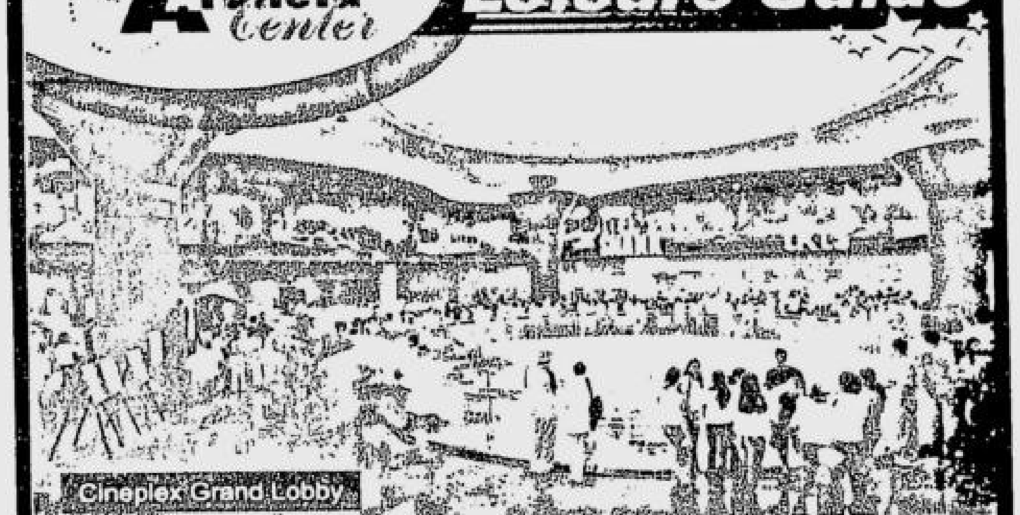
The reclusive Brando spent much of his latter years secluded in the house that he owned for more than 30 years, which shares a fence with 68-year-old Nicholson's mansion.

He also owned his own private atoll of Tetiaroa in the Pacific island territory of Tahiti.

The enigmatic double Oscar-winning star of "On The Waterfront" and "The Godfather" left a $21.6-million dollar estate that included his two homes when he died last year.

Surprising in death as in life, the intensely private Brando's last wishes raised fresh questions about his family ties, as he cut at least two heirs out of his will and revealed the names of two previously unknown children among his 10 surviving offspring. *AFP*

Araneta Center Leisure Guide



Cineplex Grand Lobby

CINEMA SCHEDULES

Gateway Cineplex 10
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KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
12:40 / 3:40 / 6:40 / 9:40

BIKINI OPEN
1:25 / 4:00 / 6:35 / 9:10

IN GOOD COMPANY
1:20 / 4:00 / 6:40 / 9:20

AMITYVILLE HORROR
12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9:30

STAR WARS - EPISODE III
1:50 / 4:50 / 7:50 / 10:50
11:50 / 2:50 / 5:50 / 8:50
1:00 / 4:00 / 7:00 / 10:00
12:30 / 3:30 / 6:30 / 9:30
12:25 / 3:25 / 6:25 / 9:25

GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
Pre-Opening Screenings P 249 / P299
STAR WARS - EPISODE III
1:10 / 4:10 / 7:10 / 10:10

ALI MALL CINEMAS

❶ STAR WARS - EPISODE III
11:35 / 2.35 / 5:35 / 8:35
❷ BIKINI OPEN
12:15 / 2:50 / 5:25 / 8:00
❸ KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
11:30 / 2:30 / 5:30 / 8:30
❹ XXX 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
1:00 / 3:20 / 5:40 / 8:00
❺ AMITYVILLE HORROR
11:40 / 1:50 / 4:00 / 6:10 / 8:20

DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

ARANETA COLISEUM EVENTS

2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE *May 25*
4:45pm Ginebra vs Fedex / 7:35pm Red Bull vs San Miguel

ASHANTI LIVE IN MANILA
May 26, Thursday, 8pm

2005 PBA FIESTA CONFERENCE *May 27*
4:45pm San Miguel vs Fedex / 7:35pm Talk N Text vs Ginebra

TM ASTIG: THE PBA GREATEST GAME *May 28*
5pm Induction 6pm TM Legends vs. TM Hataw

CENTER EVENTS

ALI MALL	***So Shoe Me: The Mother Of All Shoe Festivals*** *featuring a mallwide shoe fair, Imelda Shoe Exhibit and RP's first giant "shoe-on-wheels" ongoing until June 15.*
FARMERS PLAZA	***Back-To-School Fair*** *with big, big discounts on everything you'll need for the new school year ongoing until June 15 at the Lower Ground Floor Activity Area.*
GATEWAY MALL	***Cool Jazz Cool Classics featuring performances by Cadlo, Lynn Sherman and Affinity with Cooky Chua*** *on May 20, 21 and 22 at the Gateway Pavilion.*

LOG ON TO www.aranetacenter.net FOR MORE DETAILS OR TO SUBSCRIBE TO OUR WEEKLY E-MAIL ENTERTAINMENT UPDATES

MMTA
METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION
MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) STAR WARS III GP
2 (DOLBY) STAR WARS III GP
3 (DOLBY) KINGDOM OF HEAVEN PG13
4 (DOLBY) STAR WARS III GP
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) STAR WARS III GP

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (SDDS) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
2 (SDDS) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
3 (DTS) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
4 (GOLD-DTS) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
5 (GOLD-DOLBY) KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
6 (GOLD-SDDS) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
7 (GOLD-DOLBY) AMITYVILLE HORROR
8 CAN THIS BE LOVE
9 BIKINI OPEN
10 XXXX-2 THE NEXT LEVEL

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
2 (DOLBY) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
3 (DOLBY) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
4 (DOLBY) STARWARS: EPISODE-3

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
2 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
3 BIKINI OPEN
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 733.4238
1 (DOLBY) RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 833.3274
1 BIKINI OPEN
2 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
3 AMITYVILLE HORROR

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 724.4986
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 BIKINI OPEN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
5 STARWARS: EPISODE-3

METROPOLIS star
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Alabang) tel 850.4285
1 AMITYVILLE HORROR
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED
5 (DOLBY) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
6 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

starmall Movies
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(Las Pinas) tel (047) 237.7007
1 (DOLBY) SAHARA
2 RESERVED

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KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
BIKINI OPEN
IN GOOD COMPANY
AMITYVILLE HORROR
STARWARS - EPISODE III

ALI MALL CINEMAS
1 STAR WARS - EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 XXX 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
5 AMITYVILLE HORROR

MARRIKINA (?) Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 SIX

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470
1 STARWARS: EPISODE-3

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
4 THE INTERPRETER

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 (DOLBY) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
4 THE INTERPRETER

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.8489
1 BIKINI OPEN
2 XXX-2 THE NEXT LEVEL
3 (DOLBY) ALONE IN THE DARK
4 (DTS) FINDING NEVERLAND

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 XXX-2 THE NEXT LEVE
2 SPONGEBOB

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 BIKINI OPEN
2 (DTS) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
3 (DOLBY) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
4 THE INTERPRETER

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 BIKINI OPEN
2 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
3 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
4 THE INTERPRETER

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 ALONE IN THE DARK
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 (DOLBY) XXX-2 THE NEXT LEVEL

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 WEDDING DATE
2 THE JACKET
3 (DOLBY) XXX-2 THE NEXT LEVEL
4 (DTS) GUESS WHO

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
2 STARWARS: EPISODE-3
3 (DOLBY) BIKINI OPEN

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) SIX
2 SILANG MGA RAMPADORA
3 GALING GALING MO BABES
4 (DTS) SAHARA

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) STARWARS: EPISODE-3
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 PARAISO
5 ALONE IN THE DARK

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 BIKINI OPEN
2 XXX-2 THE NEXT LEVEL
3 GUESS WHO
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 CAN THIS BE LOVE
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 THE INTERPRETER
4 STARWARS: EPISODE-3

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 SAHARA
2 BIKINI OPEN

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

A DID YOU KNOW...

Actress and commercial model **Nancy Castigleone** had to rush her Chihuahua Muyak, to the vet when the pup became ill after inhaling Lysol. Muyak, who was confined for a week, is now back at home.

Truth . . .

From page A30

lous when talk show hosts try to provoke their guests to cry (complete with sappy background music) just to create an issue, but the star doesn't budge? Truth or consequence? When issues are not true, viewers have to endure the consequence of watching yet another inane interview.

What Binoe wants

ROBIN Padilla is ecstatic that his latest starrer, "La Visa Loca," has been given an "A" rating by the Cinema Evaluation Board. He hopes his acting will also get an "A" from viewers and critics. These days, though, it's not an American visa that Binoe is after. He is dead set on staying in Australia where his wife **Liezl** and their kids are staying. At least until he woos his wife back completely.

"I'm courting her again. She does not answer me when I tell her that I love her. In time I know I will regain her trust," he sighs. Their tumultuous love story (spanning 18 rollercoaster years) could very well be dubbed as "La Amor Loca" if it were made into a movie.

Luis in 'Kuba'

LUIS Manzano has been tapped to join the stellar cast of ABS-CBN's upcoming fantaserye, "Kampanerang Kuba."

Luis is a perfect choice, being the son of the original "Kampanerang Kuba," **Vilma Santos**. Luis confesses that the Star for All Seasons was very excited to hear of his participation in the show.

"She's very encouraging. When I called her, the first thing she said was, '*Sige, anak, kaya mo iyan. Ikaw pa, ang kulit-kulit mong tao. Kayang kaya mo iyang* character *na iyan*,'" Luis laughs.

Luis sees it as a big commitment, being his first dramatic job after four busy years of working as a VJ and comedian. "I realized a while ago that if I do join a *teleserye*, I'm gonna have to give my all, so that I can give justice to the role. I don't want to be in a *teleserye* just for the sake of having a *teleserye* on my resume. The project is special," he points out. "Apart from the connection to family, I'm working with a fabulous staff and an amazing cast. So what more can you ask for in terms of an offer?"

Will "Kampanerang Kuba" make GMA 7's "Darna" bend over like a hunchback in the ratings game or will the Pinay superhero continue to soar high in the head-on collision?

'Closer to Home'

JOSEPH Nobile's "Closer To Home" has been invited to screen at the forthcoming 2005 New York Filipino Film Festival (June 10-16) at the Imagine Asian Theater N.Y. It's a critically acclaimed film that has already been exhibited in over 26 international film festivals in 16 countries.

It is the haunting tale of two people inexorably drawn together for vastly different reasons. Dalisay struggles to journey from the Philippine countryside to New York City to marry Dean, a disillusioned ex-merchant marine. She's hoping to buy a cure for her dying sister and, ultimately, a future for her debt-ridden family, while he hopes to escape his disintegrating American family through love and a family of his own. A powerful, controversial film that quietly builds to a shattering collision of aspirations and cultures.

"Closer to Home" is now available on DVD. For orders, log on to www.elibonfilms.com

Feel-good show

RPN 9 gives televiewers a good reason to wake up early on Sunday mornings. On May 22, 9:30 to 10 a.m., the network will launch "Para Po," a "feel-good," info-tainment program hosted by up and coming host Mr. Fu.

"Para Po," is a Filipino term used by commuters to stop the public transport vehicle that they're in. In the same way, "Para Po," the program, is an invitation for people to stop and take stock of things they usually pay little attention to, or even take for granted.

Just what do people get out of chain letters? Do these letters deliver their promised benefits? What are misologists? These are just some of the questions that the program will try to answer in a very light and entertaining manner.

Adding a sweet and natural twist to how the program will present its features, Mr. Fu takes his tours, conducts his interviews and introduces his stories while aboard a jeepney—the common man's everyday vehicle.

"Para Po," is an attempt to highlight what is special in the ordinary and to find relevance in what is supposed to be inane.

(For feedback, e-mail wateringhole-shangrila@yahoo.com or dollyanne@truefaithband.com)

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the podium cinema
1. STAR WARS III
11:00 FS / 11:30 MF / 2:10 / 4:50 / 7:30
9:40 LFS / 10:10 LMF / 12:20 END
2. STAR WARS III
11:40 FS / 12:10 MF / 2:50 / 5:30 / 8:10
10:20 LFS / 11:00 LMF / 1:10 END
633-8876

sm megamall cinema 1
STAR WARS: EPISODE III
12:00 FS / 12:09 MF / 3:20 / 6:10
8:30 LFS/ 9:00 LMF / 11:20 END
633-1901

sm manila cinema 6
STAR WARS: EPISODE III
10:10 FS / 10:35 MF / 1.10 / 3:55 / 6.40
3:05 LFS / 3:25 LMF / 12:05 END
523-9240

sm cebu cinema
CINEMA 1: STAR WARS: EPISODE III
12.55 FS / 1:09 MF / 3:46 / 6.23
8:43 LFS/ 9:00 LMF / 11.20 END
CINEMA 3: STAR WARS: EPISODE III
10.30 FS / 11:00 MF / 1.39 / 4:16 / 6.53
9:13 LFS/ 9:30 LMF / 11:50 END
(032) 231-3876

METRO MANILA

sm megamall
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 STAR WARS: EPISODE III
5 CAN THIS BE LOVE
6 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
7 RESERVED
8 RESERVED
9 RESERVED
10 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
11 TRUMPETS
12 BIKINI OPEN

sm city fairview
1 STAR WARS: EPISODE III
2 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 ARE WE THERE YET?
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
5 BIKINI OPEN
6 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
7 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
8 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
9 CAN THIS BE LOVE
10 THE PACIFIER
11 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
12 IN GOOD COMPANY

sm city north edsa
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
3 RESERVED
4 xXx 2 : THE NEXT LEVEL
5 BIKINI OPEN
6 AMITYVILLE HORROR
7 STAR WARS: EPISODE III
8 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

sm city manila
1 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
2 AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 RING OF THE NIBELUNGS
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
5 POOH HEFFALUMP MOVIE
6 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
7 xXx 2: THE NEXT LEVEL
8 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
9 CAN THIS BE LOVE
10 THE WEDDING DATE
11 IN GOOD COMPANY
12 BIKINI OPEN

sm city sta. mesa
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 RESERVED
5 RESERVED
6 CAN THIS BE LOVE
7 AMTIVYLLE HORROR
8 IN GOOD COMPANY
9 STAR WARS: EPISODE III
10 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

sm city southmall
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
5 xXx 2 :THE NEXT LEVEL
6 CAN THIS BE LOVE
7 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
8 BIKINI OPEN
9 AMITYVILLE HORROR
10 KINDOM OF HEAVEN

sm city bicutan
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

sm cinema tutuban
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

sm supercenter sucat
1 THE AMITYVILLE HORROR
2 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 BIKINI OPEN

LUZON

sm city pampanga
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 CAN THIS BE LOVE
5 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
6 BIKINI OPEN

sm city baguio
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BOOGEYMAN
3 BIKINI OPEN
4 STAR WARS: EPISODE III

sm city batangas
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 BOOGEYMAN

sm city dasmariñas
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

sm city marilao
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

sm city bacoor
1 ANG LAGUSAN
2 AMITYVILLE HORROR
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
5 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
6 BIKINI OPEN
7 CAN THIS BE LOVE
8 IN GOOD COMPANY

sm city lucena
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE
2 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
3 BIKINI OPEN
4 ALONE IN THE DARK

VISAYAS AND MINDANAO

sm city cebu
1 STAR WARS : EPISODEIII
2 RESERVED
3 STAR WARS : EPISODEIII
4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
5 SIX
6 HONEY
7 BIKINI OPEN
8 STAR WARS : EPISODEIII

sm city iloilo
1 THE INTERPRETER
2 RESERVED
3 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
4 SAHARA
5 SIX
6 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
7 RESERVED
8 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

sm city davao
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
3 BIKINI OPEN
4 GUESS WHO
5 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
6 STAR WARS: EPISODE III

sm city cagayan de oro
1 STAR WARS : EPISODE III
2 BOOGEYMAN
3 SAHARA
4 STAR WARS : EPISODE III

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

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RATING: G (All Ages Admitted)

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Walt Disney
Pooh's Heffalump Movie

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 STAR WARS III
MTRCB: GP
12:15, 3:20, 6:25, 9:30

2 STAR WARS III
MTRCB: GP
1:15, 4:20, 7:25, 10:30

3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
MTRCB: PG-13
12:20, 3:30, 6:40, 9:50

4 STAR WARS III
MTRCB: GP
10:40,1:45, 4:50, 7:55

PREMIERE THEATRE STAR WARS III MTRCB: GP 11:45, 2:50, 5:55, 9:00

Movies and schedules are subject to change wthout prior notice. Please call first for SEATS AVAILABILITY

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For inquiries, call: 687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 STAR WARS III: REVENGE OF THE SITH
12:35, 3:35, 6:35, 9:35
GP

2 STAR WARS III: REVENGE OF THE SITH
11:05, 2:05, 5:05, 8:05, 11:05
GP

3 STAR WARS III: REVENGE OF THE SITH
10:20, 1:20, 4:20, 7:20, 10:20
GP

4 STAR WARS III: REVENGE OF THE SITH
11:50, 2:50, 5:50, 8:50
GP

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

STAR WARS: EPISODE III GP 12:55,3:50,6:45,9:40
STAR WARS: EPISODE III GP 1:30,4:25,7.20,10:15
STAR WARS: EPISODE III GP 11:45,2:40,5:35,8:30
STAR WARS: EPISODE III GP 12:20,3:15,6:10,9:05
AMITYVILLE HORROR R13 1:00,3:00,5:00,7:00,9:00
STAR WARS: EPISODE III GP 11:10,2:05,5:00,7:55

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1 STAR WARS Episode III • THX
11:10 2:00 4:50 7.40 10:30

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4 GUESS WHO
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5 BIKINI OPEN
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6 STAR WARS Episode III
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7 IN GOOD COMPANY
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

8 AMITYVILLE HORROR
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9 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
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536-7809 to 12

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METRO EAST
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1 IN GOOD COMPANY
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2 HEAD IN THE CLOUDS
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3 STAR WARS Episode III
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4 BIKINI OPEN
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2 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
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6 RESERVE

7 IN GOOD COMPANY
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8 RESERVE

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1 STAR WARS Episode III
2 STAR WARS Episode III
3 BIKINI OPEN
4 AMITYVILLE HORROR

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1 SAMARA RING 2
2 STAR WARS Episode III
3 STAR WARS Episode III
4 TAGOS SA LAMAN

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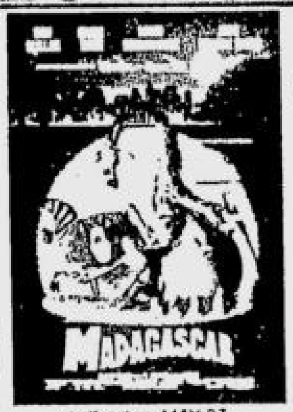
2 BIKINI OPEN
3 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN
4 STAR WARS Episode III



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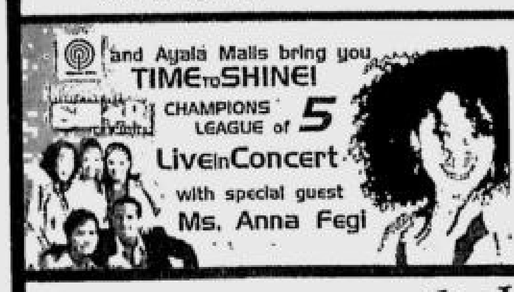

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 STAR WARS EP. 3	2 STAR WARS EP. 3	3 THX STAR WARS EP. 3 1:35, 4:25, 7:15,10:05 GUARANTEED SEATS		
	4 KINGDOM OF HEAVEN	5 AMITYVILLE HORROR	6 STAR WARS EP. 3	7 STAR WARS EP. 3	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 STAR WARS EP. 3 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 8:15	2 STAR WARS EP. 3 10:50, 1:15, 4:05, 6:55,9:00			
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX STAR WARS EP. 3 12:40, 3:30, 6:20, 9:10 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX STAR WARS EP. 3 1:10, 4:00, 6:50, 9:40 GUARANTEED SEATS			
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	3 STAR WARS EP. 3	4 STAR WARS EP. 3	5 STAR WARS EP. 3		
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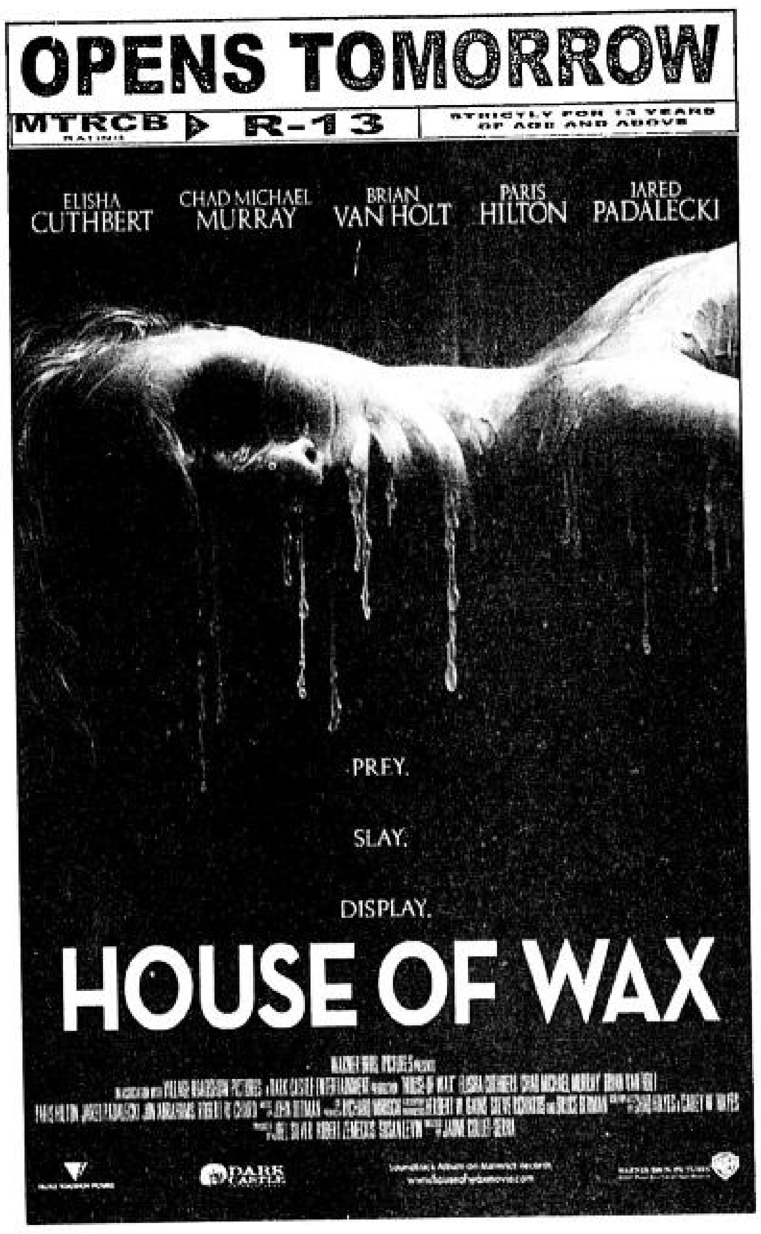
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Truth or consequence?

DOLLYWOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

JUST ASKING: Could it be true that **Stella Marquez Araneta** asked a Colombian couturier **Osmel Soza** to make Bb. Pilipinas **Gionna Cabrera**'s gown for the Ms. Universe Pageant on May 30 in Bangkok? My thespian friend **Peter Serrano** laments: "That's fine, but don't we have enough great Pinoy designers? Or is it because Ms. Araneta is Colombian? How can we say that we are promoting our culture then? Even our representatives are being trained in Colombia! I feel that Bb. Pilipinas needs a new head with fresher ideas, someone who'll be pro-Pinoy!"

Didn't Spain's regime end ages ago? *¡Que barbaridad! Es Verdad?*

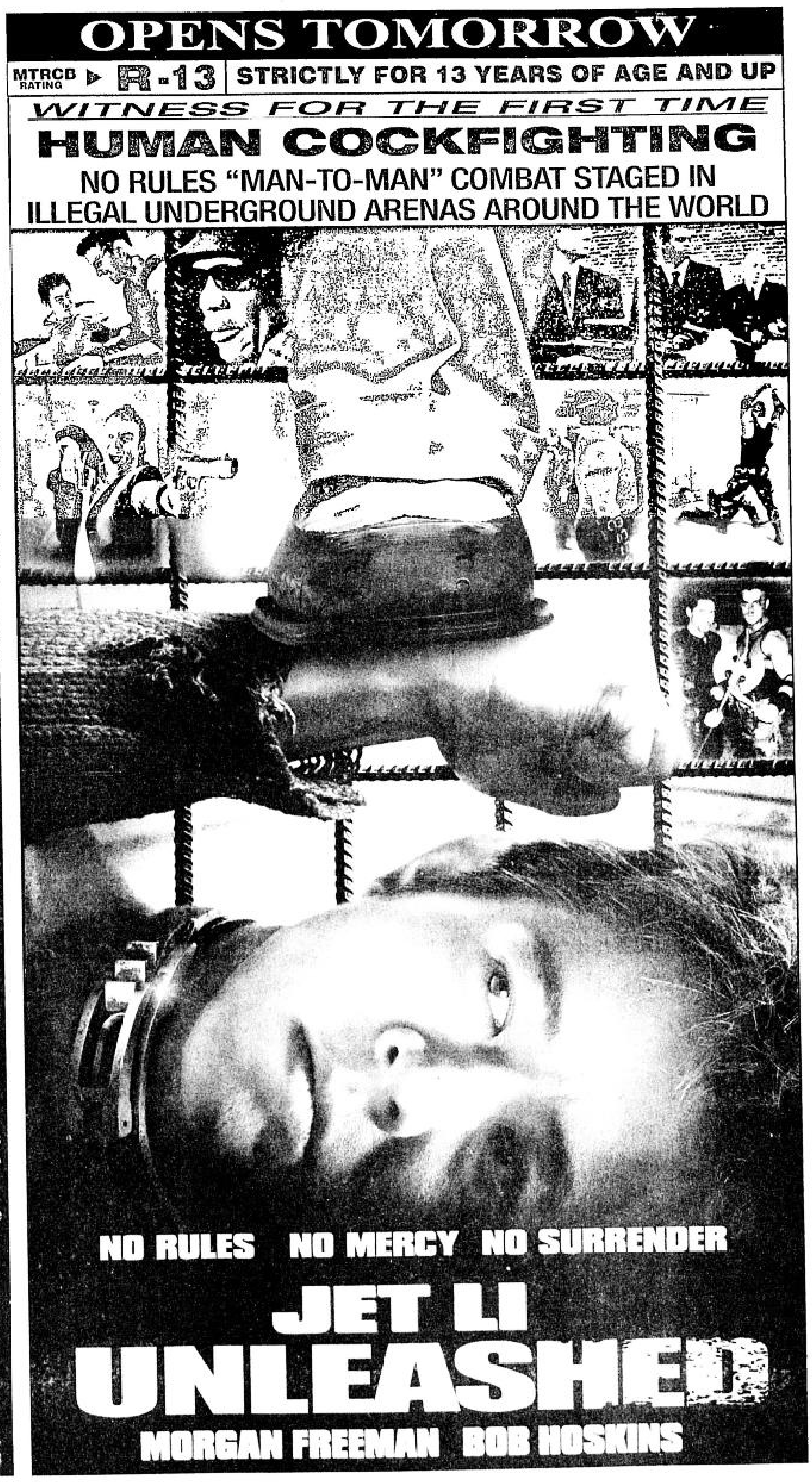
But why?

WHY is the BIR turning up the heat on erring celebrities? What about Chinese tycoons, like Mr. L.T., who owe the BIR billions? Are show biz folk just being made sacrificial lambs? When it comes to dealing with big-time businessmen, does the BIR become as meek as a lamb?

***

WHY do people badger **Jennylyn Mercado** about the alleged plan of her biological mom, who's abroad, to sue her because of the way she was depicted in Jennylyn's life story in "Magpakailanman"? It's all hearsay to begin with. Jennylyn doesn't seem to be affected at all. As she puts it, "We haven't received any word from her." Isn't it ridicu-

TRUTH/ A28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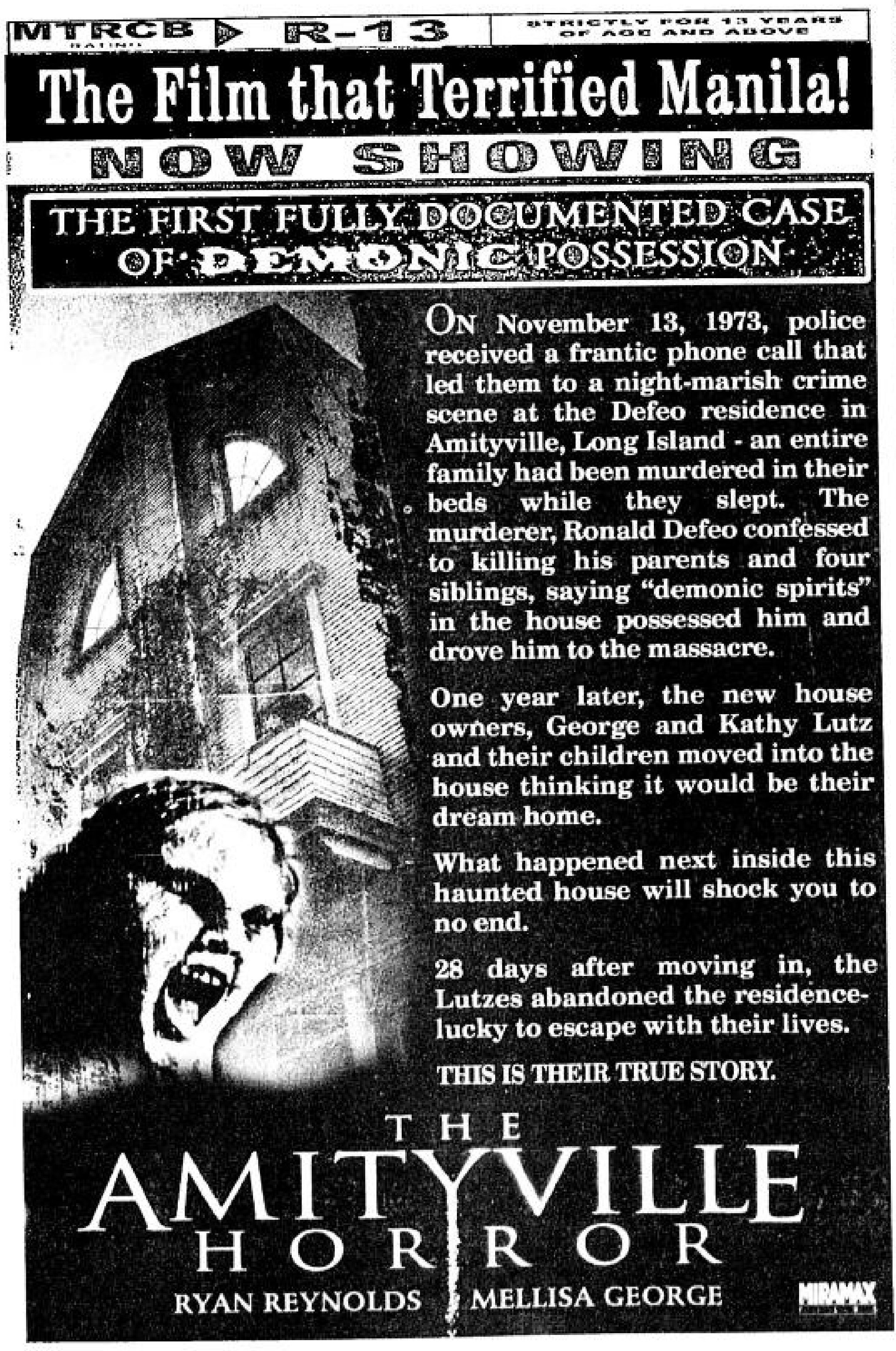
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An adviser, not a regulator

"HE REPRESENTS me," says President Arroyo. "He's doing it for love."

Vic del Rosario, Presidential consultant, is nonetheless determined to revive the piracy-beleaguered entertainment industry

By Nini Valera

FOR THE first time in months, the Viva Entertainment offices at the Tektite Building in Ortigas Center was brimming with goodwill and happy faces last Thursday, and it wasn't because of a blockbuster movie or a hit record.

The previous night, Viva big boss, Vic del Rosario, 59, was sworn in by President Macapagal-Arroyo as her consultant for the entertainment industry.

At about 4 p.m., Del Rosario sauntered in—dressed in black T-shirt, khaki pants and sock-less in sneakers—an hour late for his appointment with INQUIRER Entertainment. In two hours, he would catch an evening flight for the United States to accompany his young recording artists—Sarah Geronimo, Mark Bautista, Christian Bautista, Rachel Anne Go, Sheryl Regis, Raymond Manalo and Frenchie Dy—on an 11-city "Return of the Champions" concert tour.

"I would also be talking to possible investors in the US [for] local movies," Del Rosario said.

No conflict

Barely 48 hours after he accepted the job as presidential consultant and amid flak about his creation of the sexy song-and-dance group Hotbabes, Del Rosario was thus already at work, belying speculation that his government post would conflict with his interests as entertainment mogul.

"I don't see any conflict there," said Ms Arroyo herself during an interview with the entertainment press after the Wednesday rites in Malacañang. "That's why he's [for giving] advice, not [carrying out] regulation. When Vic gives me advice and I can see he's coming from the point of view of Viva, then I can reject it."

The apprehension about a conflict of interest on Del Rosario's part was what took the appointment so long, according to Ms Arroyo, who said nevertheless that she had not considered another candidate.

"The conflict [had to be] addressed," she said. "A presidential adviser has the rank of cabinet member and must therefore divest, and must submit a statement of assets and liabilities. But I felt it wasn't fair to make him divest from Viva. So we finally found a solution, which is [to name him] consultant, because a consultant gives advice as well."

INQUIRER Entertainment obtained a copy of the appointment paper, dated Feb. 21, 2005 for the position of "consultant for the entertainment industry" and not of adviser, as reported in some media outlets.

The President also explained that in his capacity as consultant, Del Rosario could "cover anything." She elaborated: "He's not a regulator. When you're a regulator, you have to be very strict [about] the scope. But he's gonna be giving me advice. So it could [cover everything within] a layman's understanding of entertainment."

Del Rosario would not be heading a government agency, she clarified, since "it's not our policy to create offices." He would have a support staff, however ... [and] he represents me," Ms Arroyo said. "He serves at my pleasure."

The appointment is similar to Cito Lorenzo's, who was Adviser for Million Jobs in 2002, with the salary of P1 a year, according to the President. "I can give him a [regular] salary," she said. "There are standard salaries for consultants. But Vic's doing it for love."

During the exclusive interview on Thursday, Del Rosario told INQUIRER Entertainment that he never asked for the job ... and nor was it "payback time" for his help in Ms Arroyo's presidential campaign in 2004, supplying sorties with Viva contract stars..

"She asked if I could help in government," said Del Rosario. "I told her I could help best in a field that I [was most familiar with]. I told her I'd rather help the entertainment industry, which I had been part of for 40 years. I told her there was a need to coordinate the different agencies [since] everything [in entertainment] is interrelated—movies with music, music with television, and television with movies."

He pointed to "income potentials" as an example. "Korea makes $1 billion exporting its movies, video, and music. We are lagging behind. My role is to advice her and she would consult with me. I can coordinate with all the regulatory bodies."

Start with OPM

The coordination could begin with the implementation of an executive order signed during Pres. Aquino's time of mandating radio stations to play at least four Original Pilipino Music per hour.

"This has never been implemented," Del Rosario noted. "Up to now, about 40 percent of upscale radio stations don't play OPM, or they play just one OPM per hour. That's one of the things we would implement [immediately]. Hopefully, it would ... create a demand for live concerts, overseas performances, and hopefully, we can export their [music]. No one is coordinating these activities. *Kanya-kanyang kayod* (To each his own). Sometimes, one government unit is not aware of what the other is doing."

Revive film office

Part of the industry roadmap that Del Rosario submitted to the President on Wednesday is the revival of an office that would assist foreign productions who want to do movies in the Philippines.

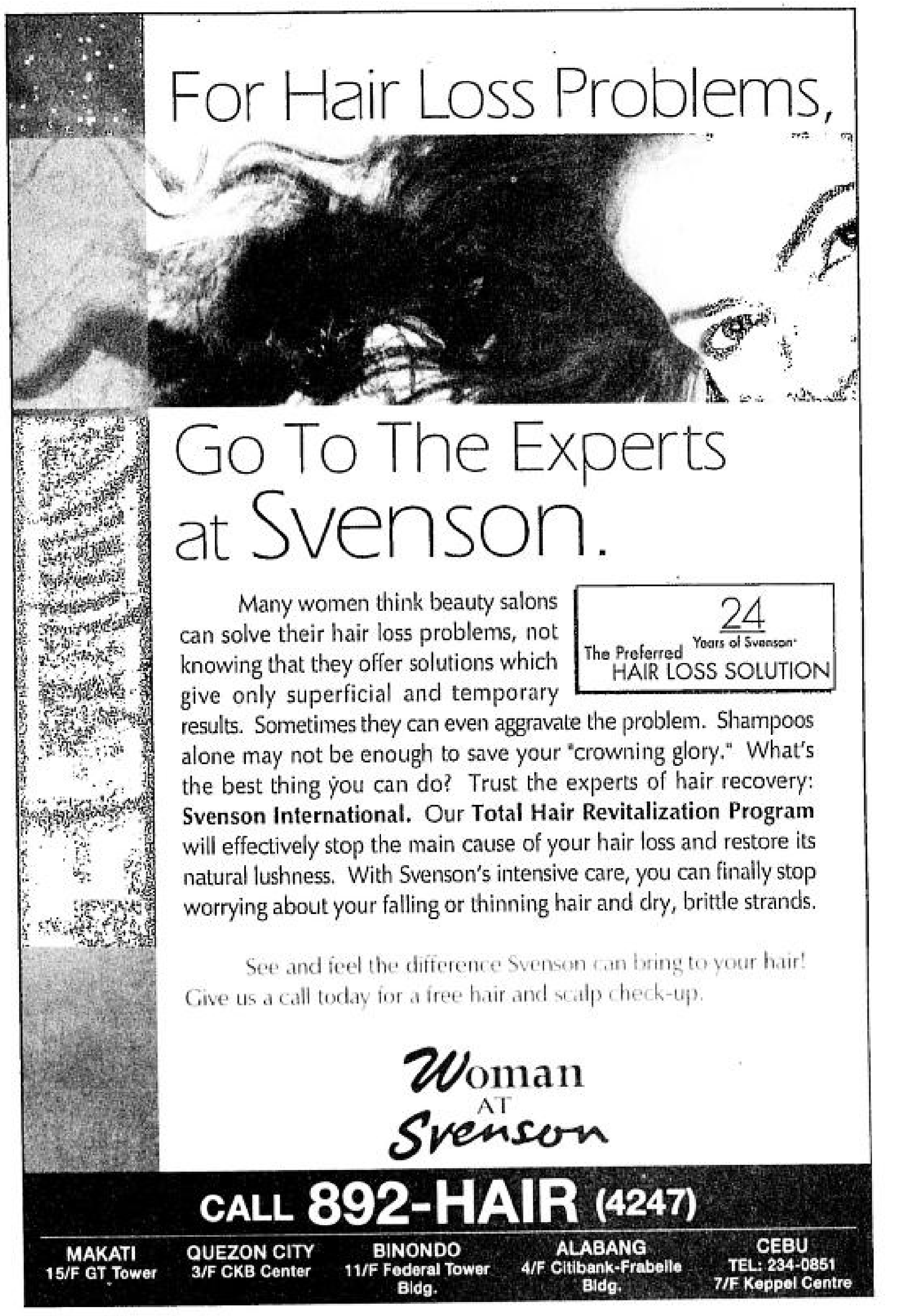
"We don't have a film office for that," said Del Rosario. "[Interested] foreign production companies ... wouldn't know who to talk to, unlike in Thailand and other countries, where an agency takes care of that. During Erap's time, we had a Film Board, but it was abolished. Its function was transferred to the Department of Tourism. That's one of the things I want to revive. A lot of people ask me about it—Hollywood producers who inquire about costs, production crews, extras, security ..."

These are just two aspects of Del Rosario's action plan to jump-start the stunted progress of the entertainment industry which has, in the past few years, taken crippling blows from record and movie pirates.

While claiming that piracy had gone down by 40 percent since actor Edu Manzano was appointed chair of the Optical Media Board, Del Rosario admitted that the industry had a lot of catching up to do to reclaim its supremacy in the Asian market. Despite the dismal state of affairs, however, Del Rosario was optimistic that the movie and record industries would thrive again in the future.

"All industries suffered a downtrend after the Asian crisis," he explained. "Most businesses downsized. The same was true for the movie and the record businesses. What is happening now is that we are producing more quality pictures and records even if the output is

AN ADVISER/ A2-2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President Arroyo says Vic del Rosario is an adviser, not a regulator

From page A2-1

lower in quantity than in previous years. The money went into better projects because the local audience demanded this. What is dying is the B-movie industry, not the mainstream movie outfits."

These bold pronouncements are, of course, based on Del Rosario's 40-year experience as a record executive and his nearly 20-year experience as a movie producer.

In 1965, at age 19, Del Rosario, then a third year college student in San Beda, plunked in his lifesavings of P2,000 with his cousin Orly Ilacad's P2,000 to start Vicor Music Corporation. Ilacad was then front man of the Ramrods, a local counter-culture band as popular as Ramon Jacinto's RJ and the Riots.

Del Rosario recalled: "The first two years were bad. We were recording bands like Dyna Souls, who would do cover versions of popular American hits. The local record business was dominated by Mareco, which produced *kundiman*, like songs by the Mabuhay Singers. Since we were young, we went for alternative music which, at the time, was rock and roll."

The duo hit it big with Jeanne Young's 45 rpm cover of "Nicky Hokey," flip sided with "You Don't Own Me," which sold 80,000 copies. This was followed by with Helen Gamboa's "Bang-Shang-a-Lang" and a series of juke-box ditties from another diva of the '60s, Norma Ledesma.

In 1968, Nora Aunor changed the complexion of the local record industry.

"Nora was like Sarah today," said Del Rosario. "Helen and the other older singers became passé. That was when I signed Tirso Cruz III and recorded his song, 'In The Year 2525.' But Nora dominated the music scene, until I discovered Victor Wood. At that time, long playing albums were already becoming the fad so we graduated to that."

Martial law in 1972 again altered the trend, and Pinoy Power reverberated.

"That's when we recorded Pilita's (Corrales) first Tagalog album. *Pilipit pa ang dila n'ya*, and Mang Levi (Celerio) was her dialogue coach," Del Rosario narrated.

The song that Pilita popularized is now an OPM classic—"Kapantay Ay Langit," by the late George Canseco.

"That was our biggest selling album, aside from Victor Wood's records, who did covers of 'Mr. Lonely,' 'Crying Time,' and a lot more hits," said Del Rosario.

In 1974, the awesome Rico Puno took over Wood's throne with his reinvention of Mowtown's R&B sound in the adaptation of "Memories" and "Ain't it a Great Day." Then there was the original vixen, Didith Reyes, whose steamy renditions of "Nananabik" and "Bakit Ako Mahihiya," became the precursors of today's Hotbabes recordings. Whatever the trend was—Manila Sound, Pinoy Rock, Bubble Gum—and whoever was the big star—Sharon Cuneta, Rey Valera, Mike Hanopol, Basil Valdez, Sampaguita, VST & Co.—Vicor Music Corporation was at the head of the pack.

But until today, Del Rosario has not broken his all-time monster hit, Freddie Aguilar's "Anak" (1978), which blazed the trail for OPM even in foreign markets.

He would like to re-create the success of "Anak," Del Rosario said, maybe with another song and another singer, and he's hoping to do it in this lifetime.

"That's the only way to go for us to succeed—go to the foreign market," he stressed.

The same vision applies to moviemaking, he noted. With the trademark glossy look of his Viva films—from Sharon Cuneta's bubble-gum hits ("Dear Heart") to the youth-oriented films of Aga Mulach ("Bagets") to the Vilma Santos dramas ("Gaano Kadalas Ang Minsan") to the *komiks* adaptations ("Darna," "Sinasamba Kita") to the alternative genre ("Keka," "Hibla") to the digital dictates of the times ("Boso")—Del Rosario rode trends and even started some.

How far would this vision go in advising the President?

"Hopefully, a long way," Del Rosario said. "There's a bright future out there for Philippine entertainment. I am here to help harness that bright future for the whole industry."

Del Rosario then caught a plane bound for New York last Friday and would start chasing the future.

A thought from a non-reader.
A mind on the blink can be a real turn-off. If you need a bit of stimulation, try reading for a change. Just a thought.
Read more. Be more. PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

But can he do it again?

From page A2-1

"Joyride," "Now and Forever."

Last Valentine's Day, Alejandre's "Let the Love Begin" made certified movie stars of Richard Gutierrez and Angel Locsin. Now, *direk* Mac's newest challenge is to launch to movie stardom Starstruck winners and real-life sweethearts Jennylyn Mercado and Mark Herras.

The vehicle is MAQ Productions' romantic comedy, "Say That You Love Me."

Can you catch lightning in a bottle twice?

I would love for 'Say That You Love Me' to gross more than one hundred million ... but that's in God's hands. We've all done our best to come up with a very romantic movie, and based on the comments we've received from those who've seen the trailer and music video, I think we have a chance.

How do you keep it "fresh"?

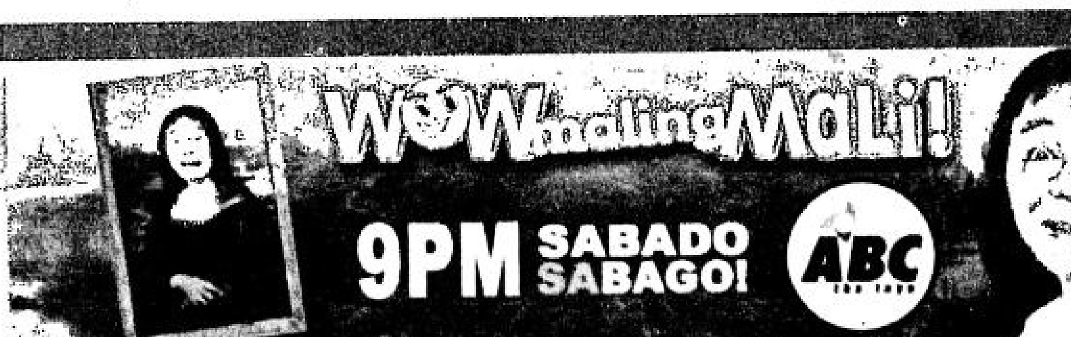
"Say That You Love Me" is different from the Richard-Angel movie, which was a 'poor boy loves rich girl' story. This one is not about social distinctions; it's about the unlikely attraction that develops between a very spunky girl and a guy who lacks self-confidence. And then when everything is looking rosy, the guy does something incredibly stupid to make the girl hate him. I'm sure everyone can relate to this. Love makes us do really silly, stupid things that we end up regretting."

Aren't you afraid of being "typecast" as a director?

Not at all. I'm just grateful and happy to be working at this challenging time in our industry. I don't mind being known as a director of *kilig* movies. There are worse things one could be known for. It's a compliment that audiences feel something positive when they see my films. Being giddy is better than feeling sad or angry.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

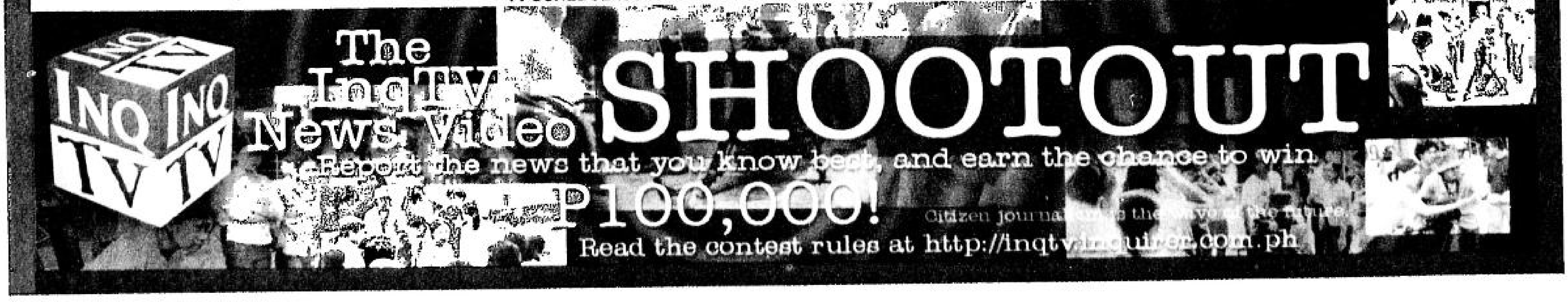
Tuesday, May 24, 2005



WowMalingMali! 9PM SABADO SABAGO! ABC
ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema				Showbiz No 1 (4.25 PM)	Yu-Gi-Oh! (5.10 PM)	Meteor Garden Full Edition		TV Patrol World		Mga Anghel Na Walang Langit	Hiram	Ikaw Ang Lahat Sa Akin	Memories Of Bali	Stained Glass	Bora			Insider
ABC 5			Problema Nyo, Sagot Ko	EZ Shop	Anime Ring Kaisho				Sentro	Lizzie Mcguire	Three Blind Dates		Wow Mali		Big News	The Probe Team Documentaries		Billboard On-Air	
GMA 7	Saang Sulok Ng Langit	Now and Forever	Glass Shoes	One Piece	Flame Of Recca	Full House		24 Oras		Darna		Encantadia	All About Eve	Extra Challenge		Bahay Mo Ba 'To?			Saksi
RPN 9		Metro TV Shopping	Defenders Of The Earth	Hey Arnold!	As Told By Ginger	Wild Thornberries	Sponge Bob		Tough Enough	7 Days		Medium		Cold Case		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Treat		
IBC 13		Lifestyle		EZ Shop		Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Pangarap Kong Jackpot		Shakey's V-League		Asian X-Tour					IBC News Tonite	Up Close And Personal	
JackTV	Just For Laughs	Just For Laughs	Hip Hop Nation	WWE Bottomline		WWE Afterburn		X-Play	Banzai	Mad TV		Trigger Happy TV	Primetime Glick	South Park	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Stripperella	Family Guy	Wwe Heat	
Nickelodeon	Blues Clues	Rugrats	The Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	All That	Are You Afraid of the Dark?	100 Deeds of Eddie McDowd	The Amanda Show	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	Fairly Odd Parents	SpongeBob SquarePants	As Told By Ginger	Yakkity Yak	Chalkzone	Rocket Power	Hey Arnold!	The Wild Thornberrys	The Angry Beavers	Rugrats
MYX		Urban MYX	MYX Backtrax	Pop MYX	OPM MYX	Take 5	My MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Mellow MYX	Rock MYX	Pop MYX	Urban MYX	Top Of The Pops	MYX Remakes	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	OPM MYX	Mellow MYX
ETC		Good Morning Miami	Knock First	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Elimidate	Change of Heart	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	JKX	Simple Life	One Tree Hill		Who Wants To Marry My Dad 2		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
Cinema One		Ano Bang Meron Ka?				Muling Umawit Ang Puso				Walang Iba Kundi Ikaw				Ms. Kristina Moran				All My Life	
Studio 23				PBL Game 2				Ragnarok	Project Arms	Wazzup Wazzup	Angel			Smallville		News Central	Oprah		The Men's Room
AXN		CSI Miami (Season II)		CSI: Miami (Season II)		Gensomaden Saiyuki	Gensomaden Saiyuki	Pensacola (Season III)		Alias (Season II)		Ripley's Believe It or Not		CSI: NY (Season I)		The Amazing Race 7			
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		Hollywood Squares	Home Improvement	Buffy The Vampire Slayer		The Simpsons	The Drew Carey Show	Star News Asia	Friends	Charmed		Wild Card/Miss USA 2005/Criss Angel Supernatural Mindfreak		Miss Match		Friends	Charmed
CNN				Business International		Larry King Live		World News	World Sport	Business International		World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
National Geographic		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster		Interpol Investigates		Egypt Detectives: Mystery Of The First Egyptians	Africa From The Ground Up	Wow		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Air Crash Investigation		Seconds From Disaster	
Solar Sports				GWS Ep.20-2005	Kotv Magazine	The Badminton Masters '05 SFinals			FED Cup 1st rnd '05 USA vs. Belgium				Sports Desk	NBA Playoffs Conf. SFinals Game7					NBA Inside Stuff
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Molto Mario	Hot Off The Grill	Good Eats	Extreme Cuisine	Unwrapped	Passion For Dessert	Second Look		Look For Less	Life & Style		Clean House		Road & Track	Back To Basics
HBO		That Old Feeling (2:55 PM)			Dark Horse (4:40 PM)				Swept Away (6:20 PM)			The Matrix Revolutions (7.55 PM)				Six Feet Under 49 The Black Forest		Identity (10:50PM)	
Star Movies				Vampire's Kiss (4.15 PM)				That Darn Cat (5.55 PM)			Laws Of Attraction			Prozac Nation			Kung Phooey (10.35PM)		
Cartoon Network	Scooby-Doo Show	The All New Popeye Show		Tom & Jerry Show	The Woody Woodpecker Show	Ed, Edd N Eddy	Mucha Lucha!	X-Men Evolution	Static Shock	Gundam Wing	Shaman King	Looney Tunes Show		The Powerpuff Girls	Dexter's Laboratory	Time Squad	Thundercats	He-Man & The Masters Of The Universe	Gundam Seed
Disney Channel	Mr Bean The Animated Series	Totally Spies	The Sleepover Club	Art Attack/Unlakative Bunny	Buzz Lightyear Of Star Command	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr Bean The Animated Series	House Of Mouse	Wonderful World Of Disney			My Wife And Kids	That's So Raven	America's Funniest Home Video	According To Jim	Wonderful World Of Disney	
Cinemax			Undercover Lover (3:45 PM)			Deadfall (5.15 PM)				The Life Of David Gale				Combustion			Money Talks (10.35PM)		
Hallmark Channel	Who's The Boss	Just Cause		HCA: The Fairytaler	Sesame Street		Mad About You	Who's The Boss	Bewitched			Just Cause					Missing (10.35PM)		
Discovery Channel		Civilisations				Wild Science		Ultimate Discovery		Rides		Human Discovery		Wild Discovery		Ultimate Discovery		Science Mysteries	
Sports Plus				EDS Byron Nelson Classic Highlights		French Open '05 Day2 1st Rd.													
NBN	Taiwan/Winner TV Shopping	Value Vision			Teledyaryo	Value Vision		MMDA On The Road		The Working President	Family Rosary Crusade	Teledyaryo		Network Forum		Auto Focus			

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.



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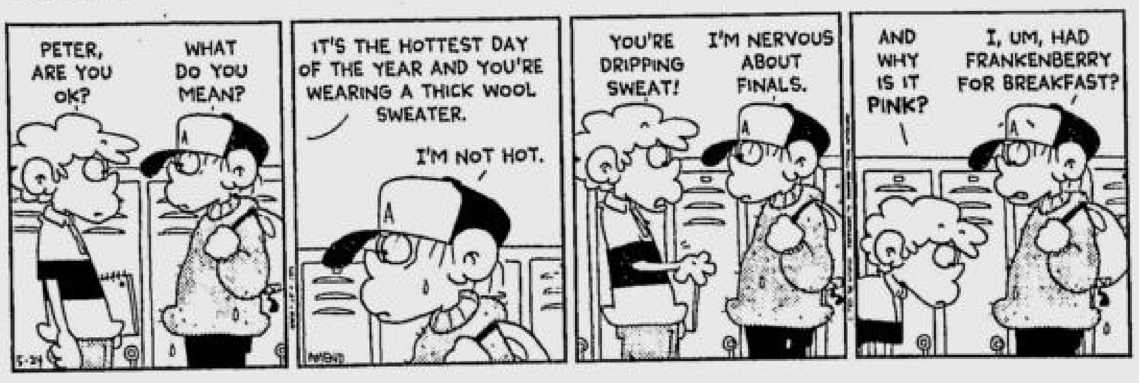
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

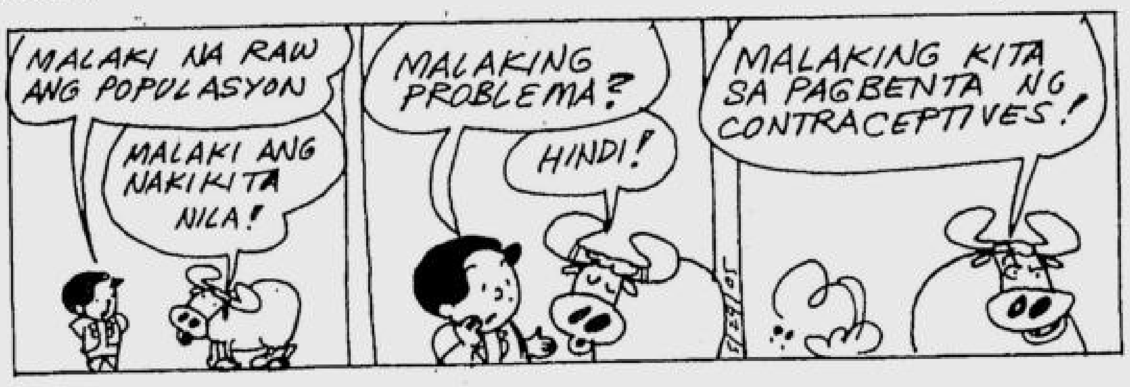
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


PETER, ARE YOU OK?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
IT'S THE HOTTEST DAY OF THE YEAR AND YOU'RE WEARING A THICK WOOL SWEATER.
I'M NOT HOT.
YOU'RE DRIPPING SWEAT!
I'M NERVOUS ABOUT FINALS.
AND WHY IS IT PINK?
I, UM, HAD FRANKENBERRY FOR BREAKFAST?
5-24

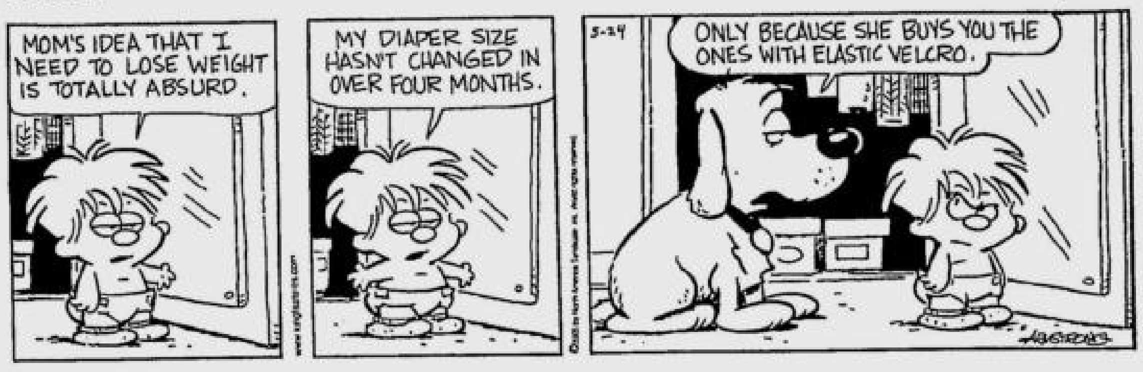
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


MALAKI NA RAW ANG POPULASYON
MALAKI ANG NAKIKITA NILA!
MALAKING PROBLEMA?
HINDI!
MALAKING KITA SA PAGBENTA NG CONTRACEPTIVES!

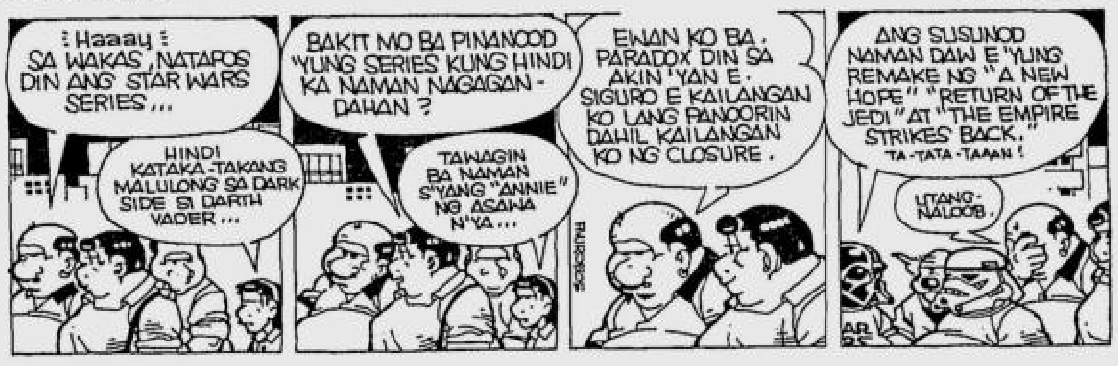
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MOM'S IDEA THAT I NEED TO LOSE WEIGHT IS TOTALLY ABSURD.
MY DIAPER SIZE HASN'T CHANGED IN OVER FOUR MONTHS.
5-24
ONLY BECAUSE SHE BUYS YOU THE ONES WITH ELASTIC VELCRO.

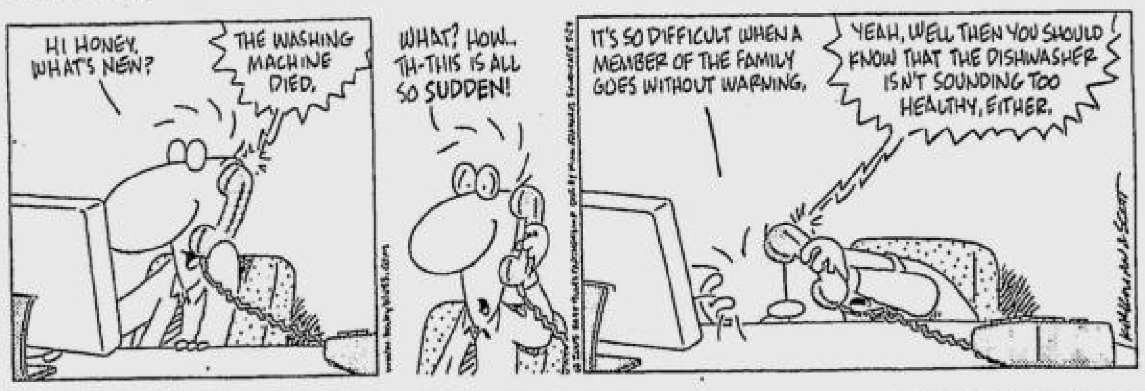
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


Haaay
SA WAKAS, NATAPOS DIN ANG STAR WARS SERIES...
HINDI KATAKA-TAKANG MALULONG SA DARK SIDE SI DARTH VADER...
BAKIT MO BA PINANOOD 'YUNG SERIES KUNG HINDI KA NAMAN NAGAGANDAHAN?
TAWAGIN BA NAMAN S'YANG "ANNIE" NG ASAWA N'YA...
EWAN KO BA. PARADOX DIN SA AKIN 'YAN E. SIGURO E KAILANGAN KO LANG PANOORIN DAHIL KAILANGAN KO NG CLOSURE.
ANG SUSUNOD NAMAN DAW E 'YUNG REMAKE NG "A NEW HOPE" "RETURN OF THE JEDI" AT "THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK."
TA-TATA-TAAAN!
UTANG-NALOOB.

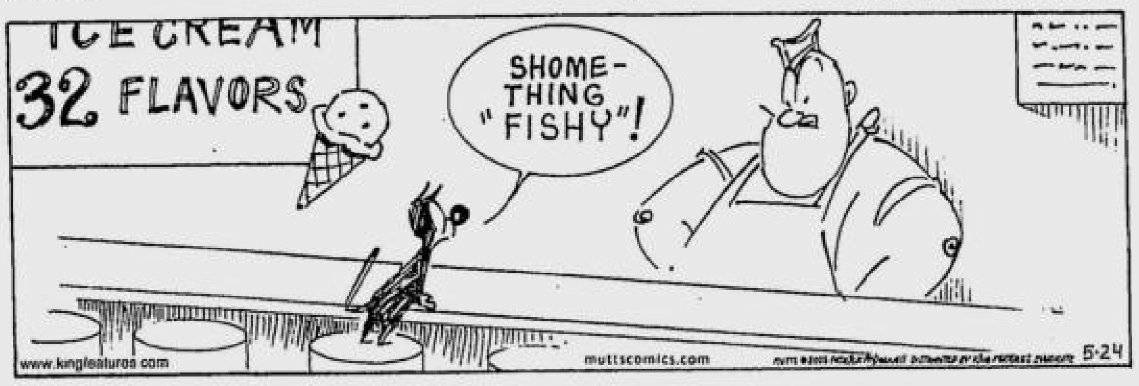
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HI HONEY. WHAT'S NEW?
THE WASHING MACHINE DIED.
WHAT? HOW.. TH-THIS IS ALL SO SUDDEN!
IT'S SO DIFFICULT WHEN A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY GOES WITHOUT WARNING.
YEAH, WELL THEN YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THE DISHWASHER ISN'T SOUNDING TOO HEALTHY, EITHER.

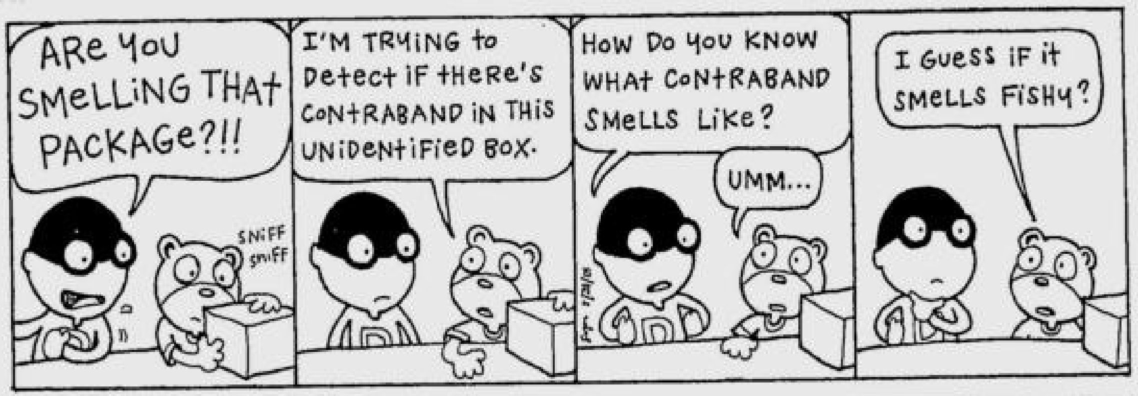
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ICE CREAM
32 FLAVORS
SHOME-THING "FISHY"!
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
5-24

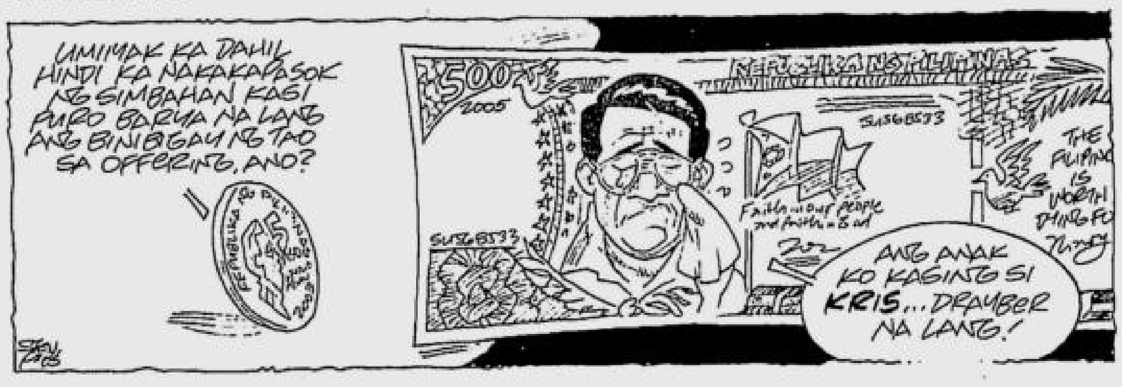
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


ARe YoU SMeLLiNG THAT PACKAGe?!!
SNiFF sniFF
I'M TRYiNG to Detect iF tHeRe's CoNtRABAND iN THiS UNiDeNtiFieD BoX.
How Do you KNow WHAt CoNtRABAND SMeLLS Like?
UMM...
I Guess iF it SMeLLS FiSHY?

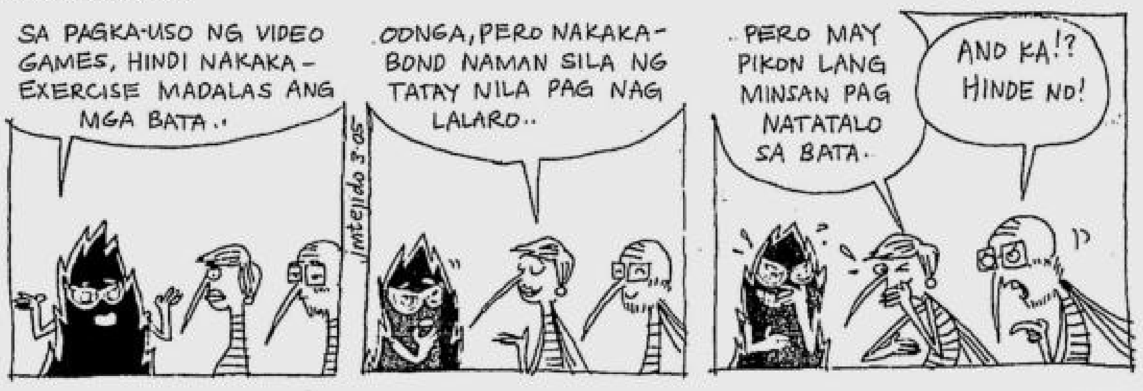
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


UMIMAK KA DAHIL HINDI KA NAKAKAPASOK NG SIMBAHAN KASI PURO BARYA NA LANG ANG BINIBIGAY NG TAO SA OFFERING, ANO?
500
2005
ANG ANAK KO KAGINTO SI KRIS...DRAYBER NA LANG!

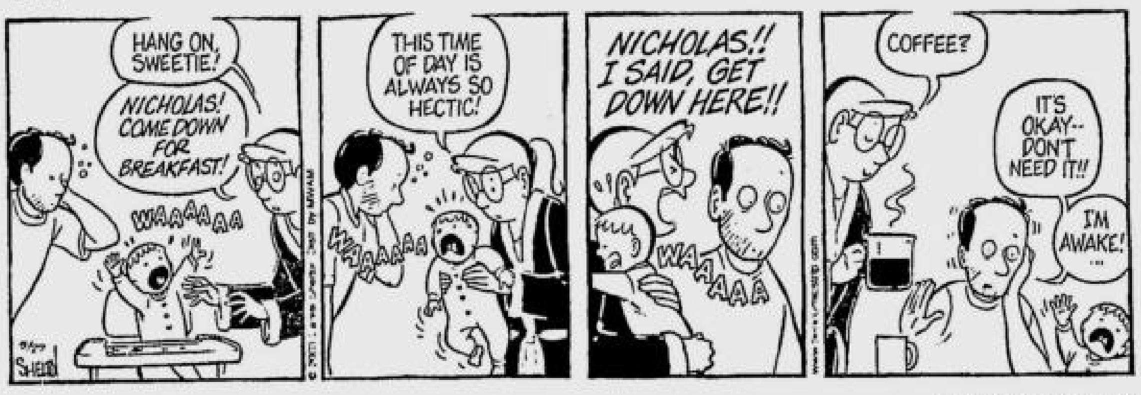
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SA PAGKA-USO NG VIDEO GAMES, HINDI NAKAKA-EXERCISE MADALAS ANG MGA BATA..
OONGA, PERO NAKAKA-BOND NAMAN SILA NG TATAY NILA PAG NAG LALARO..
PERO MAY PIKON LANG MINSAN PAG NATATALO SA BATA.
AND KA!? HINDE NO!

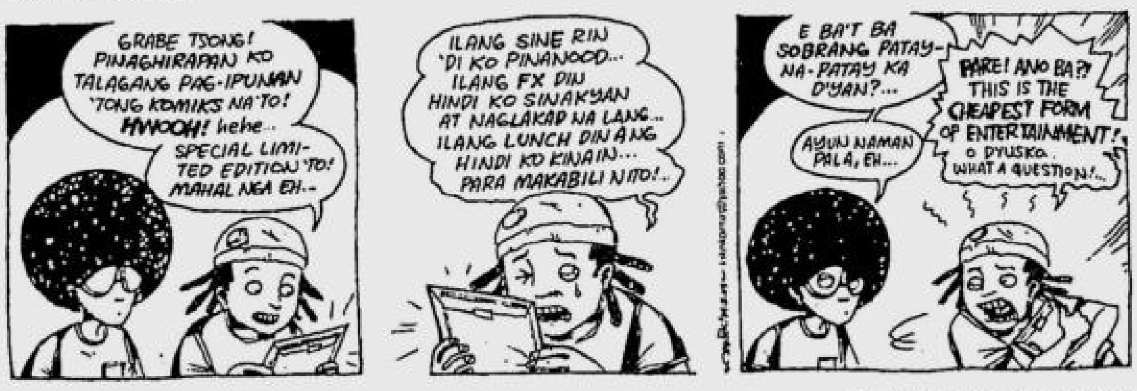
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HANG ON, SWEETIE!
NICHOLAS! COME DOWN FOR BREAKFAST!
WAAAAAA
THIS TIME OF DAY IS ALWAYS SO HECTIC!
WAAAAAA
NICHOLAS!! I SAID, GET DOWN HERE!!
WAAAAAA
COFFEE?
IT'S OKAY-- DON'T NEED IT!!
I'M AWAKE!

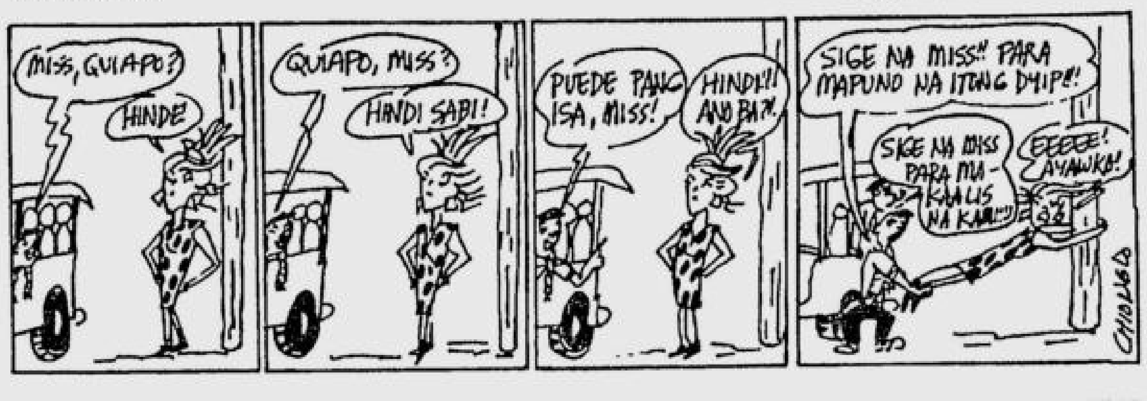
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


GRABE TSONG! PINAGHIRAPAN KO TALAGANG PAG-IPUNAN 'TONG KOMIKS NA'TO! HWOOH! hehe..
SPECIAL LIMITED EDITION 'TO! MAHAL NGA EH..
ILANG SINE RIN 'DI KO PINANOOD... ILANG FX DIN HINDI KO SINAKYAN AT NAGLAKAD NA LANG... ILANG LUNCH DIN ANG HINDI KO KINAIN... PARA MAKABILI NITO!..
E BA'T BA SOBRANG PATAY-NA-PATAY KA D'YAN?...
AYUN NAMAN PALA, EH...
PARE! ANO BA?! THIS IS THE CHEAPEST FORM OF ENTERTAINMENT!.. O DYUSKO. WHAT A QUESTION!..

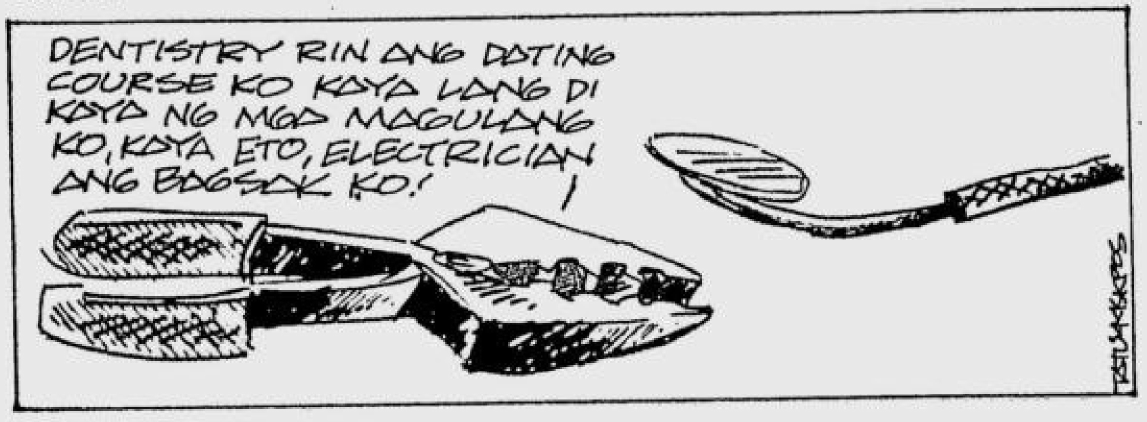
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MISS, QUIAPO?
HINDE!
QUIAPO, MISS?
HINDI SABI!
PUEDE PANG ISA, MISS!
HINDI!! ANO BA?!
SIGE NA MISS!! PARA MAPUNO NA ITONG DYIP!!
SIGE NA MISS PARA MAKAALIS NA KAMI!!
EEEEE! AYAWKO!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


DENTISTRY RIN ANG DATING COURSE KO KAYA LANG DI KAYA NG MGA MAGULANG KO, KAYA ETO, ELECTRICIAN ANG BAGSAK KO!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're extremely expressive. You definitely have a way with words. You're to the point, yet poetic. You are also concerned about social issues and your environment. As you grow, your views constantly change. Despite your outspoken quality, privately you are reserved. This year you let go of things you've been involved with for the past nine years.

Birthdate of: Roseanne Cash, singer/songwriter; Bob Dylan, singer; Patti LaBelle, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You're absolutely poetic today. In fact, you might earn money through your words or your communications. You feel warm and sympathetic to siblings, relatives and neighbors.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a hot money day for you! You can make money connected with oil, gas, plastics, perfumes, pharmaceuticals, movies, film, the ocean and chemistry. And you're spending on luxury!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel warmhearted, kind and sympathetic to everyone you meet today. You have imaginative ideas about travel, foreign countries, publishing and the media. It's an exciting day (in a gentle way).

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You will enjoy some solitude if you can find it in peaceful, beautiful surroundings. You want to mellow out. Don't be a martyr to the demands of others.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might join a friend or group to help those who are more needy than you are. While you're doing this, you'll also enjoy the company of others. (It's a friendly day.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): People see you in sympathetic terms today because to them you appear to be kind and caring. You also seem to be glamorous! (Others might envy you.)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You feel very idealistic today. Your thinking ranges from religion to politics to fairy tales! You're pondering faraway places. Work with children will be rewarding.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Either you want to help a family member today or a family member is prepared to help you. Either way, it's a win-win situation. (Family helping family is a good thing.)

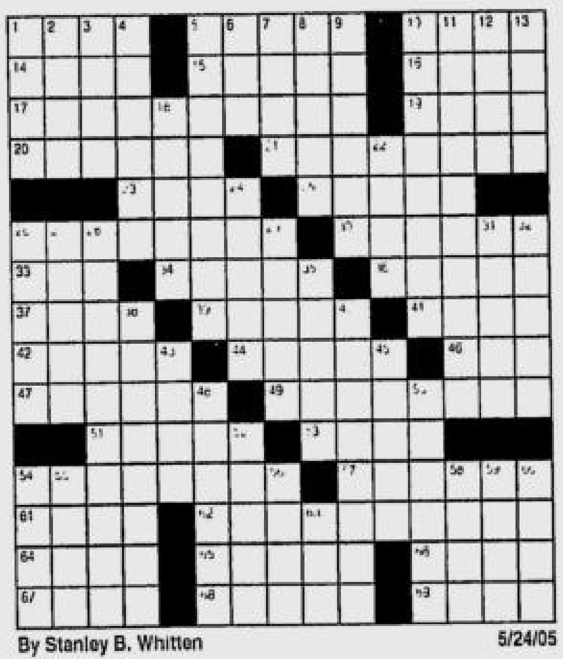
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is the perfect day to mend broken fences with those who are closest to you. It's easy to achieve a good give-and-take and a nice mutual understanding with others.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Co-workers are helpful today; possibly, you're helpful to a coworker as well. It's also a good day to do artistic, creative work. And there's money in them thar' hills!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a wonderful day for romance! If you're in love, it's like a fairy tale. Just remember that fairy tales are a fuzzy interpretation of reality.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Buy something beautiful for your home today. At the very least, take home fresh flowers. Do something to make where you live feel more comfortable and welcoming.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

5/24/05

ACROSS
1 Antiaircraft fire
5 Make into law
10 Tough journey
14 Margarita garnish
15 Ponti of the movies
16 Mature
17 Excessive
19 "Ain't She Sweet?" songwriter
20 Bird feathers
21 Needle wielder
23 First lady of scat
25 Actor Glenn
26 Very large numbers
30 Ho Chi Minh City, once
33 Lemon drink
34 Meara and Bancroft
36 Wet thoroughly
37 Jazz phrase
39 __ Jessica Parker
41 Fingertip
42 Tiny bits
44 Guys
46 Theol. belief
47 System of morals
49 Book of tales
51 Ciao on Kauai
53 Slight
54 Frightening creatures
57 Spiny-finned fish
61 "Paper Lion" star Alan
62 Ultimate figure
64 Symbol on a staff
65 Man from Manchuria
66 Press
67 Fabled loser
68 Gilliam or Bradshaw
69 NaCl

DOWN
1 Failure
2 Exist
3 Prayer closer
4 Nut
5 Troop groups
6 Scottish negative
7 Word after liberal or fine
8 Coagulates
9 Subjects
10 Gripping power
11 Football lineman
12 Foil cousin
13 Deborah of Hollywood
18 Actress Shire
22 Natterjack
24 Indochinese region
26 Pierre Curie's wife
27 Blockhead
28 Southpaw
29 Of an ecological sequence
31 Basketry willow
32 Journalist Bly
35 Capital on the Willamette
38 Guaranteed
40 Domination
43 Dundee fellow
45 Medicinal fluid
48 Fifth month of the Jewish year
50 AFB outside of Las Vegas
52 Got out of bed
54 Speed-of-sound measure
55 Earthenware jar
56 Move slightly
58 Italian moola, once
59 Organic compound
60 Camp shelter
63 Black goo

Monday's Puzzle Solved

T	E	A	C	H	■	E	C	H	O	■	P	A	P	A
W	A	H	O	O	■	B	L	O	W	■	O	M	E	N
O	R	A	N	G	E	B	O	W	L	■	P	E	R	T
■	■	■	■	T	A	S	T	E	■	P	A	R	S	E
P	A	T	O	I	S	■	■	S	T	O	R	I	E	D
A	T	H	L	E	T	I	C	■	R	O	T	C	■	■
C	R	E	E	D	■	M	I	S	E	R	■	A	P	R
T	I	P	S	■	T	O	D	A	Y	■	I	S	L	E
S	A	L	■	B	I	K	E	S	■	C	O	C	O	S
■	■	A	E	O	N	■	R	E	S	O	L	U	T	E
M	A	T	T	H	A	U	■	■	E	L	A	P	S	E
A	L	T	E	R	■	P	L	E	A	D	■	■	■	■
T	I	E	R	■	S	P	Y	G	L	A	S	S	E	S
T	A	R	N	■	T	E	R	O	■	I	P	A	N	A
E	S	S	E	■	E	R	A	S	■	R	A	T	E	D

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5/24/05

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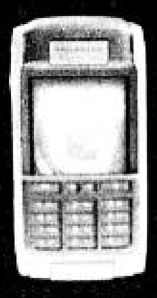
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B1

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PETRON

91-day T-bill rate slides below 6%

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY bill rates continued to slide across all maturities yesterday as the local banking sector remained very liquid, triggering oversubscriptions for the short-term government securities.

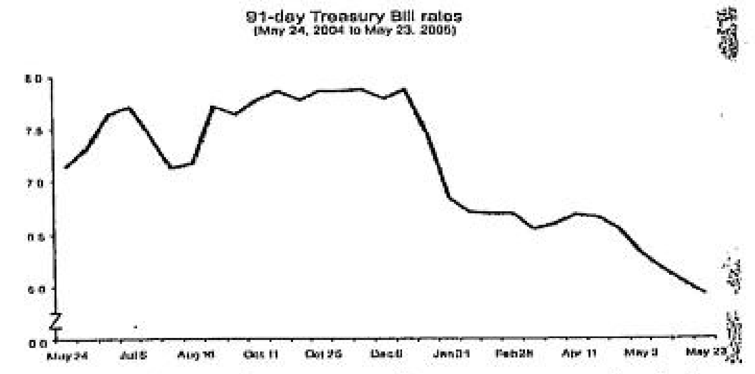
Yesterday was the fifth consecutive auction when treasury bill rates declined across the board.

The 91-day rate, used as a benchmark in pricing bank loans, breached the 6-percent mark at 5.92 percent. This was 10.8 basis points lower than last week's, and the lowest since October 2003.

"This is still the same old story of liquidity overhang. The government is very pleased with the continued decline," National Treasurer Omar Cruz said in a briefing after yesterday's auction.

The 182-day rate fell by 13 basis points to 6.966 percent. The 364-day debt instrument fetched 7.985 percent, or 15.5 basis points lower than the 8.14 percent recorded last week.

The auction yesterday got a warm response from the market as all tenors were over-subscribed.

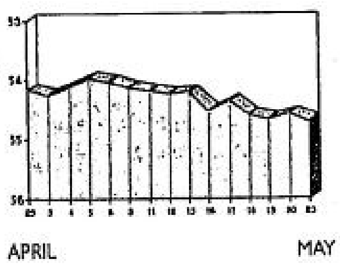

91-day Treasury Bill rates
(May 24, 2004 to May 23, 2005)

91-DAY/ B0

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

PESO-DOLLAR RATE



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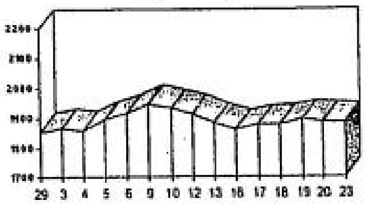
per ounce Hong Kong, May 23, 2005

STOCK MARKET

Shares close slightly lower

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B3)

SHARE prices closed slightly lower yesterday, with last-minute bargain hunting limiting the market's fall, brokers said.

They said the market consolidated in the absence of fresh positive leads and amid mounting concerns over a political scandal linking President Gloria Arroyo's husband and a son to gambling activities.

The charges, made by the political opposition, have not been substantiated and already denied by Ms Arroyo.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index shed 3.25 points to 1,883.48. It traded between 1,878.25 and 1,886.73.

The broader all-shares index retreated 1.85 points to 1,150.98.

Losers and gainers were equal at 30 each, while 43 stocks ended unchanged.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. was the most active stock. It ended down P10 at P1,455, tracking Friday's fall of its American Depositary Receipts.

"Investors are largely watching on the sidelines and have preferred to hold onto their shares for the meantime. They want to know how this political controversy would unfold," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

AFP

RP rating outlook OK for now—S&P

STANDARD & Poor's is not contemplating a change in the Philippines' BB-minus rating and its stable outlook, despite a budget surplus, a credit analyst at the global rating agency said yesterday in Hong Kong.

The government said last Thursday it had a budget surplus of P3.3 billion in April, the first in four years, after record collections that month by the main tax agency.

"Our rating and the outlook is appropriate for the time being notwithstanding the budget surplus," S&P credit analyst Agost Benard told Reuters.

"The surplus... is encouraging, (but) what we are talking about here is a need for a fundamental turnaround of the fiscal deficit and debt positions," he said.

A change in the outlook was also not imminent, he said.

"The next move, if things continue in the same line, which is what I'd call incremental improvement ... then the next change in the outlook would be a positive and not a negative," he said.

"I don't think it (an upgrade) is likely at this stage, because we just downgraded the Philippines in January and we have a stable outlook on the ratings," Benard said.

He noted that any potential upgrade will be preceded by a change to a positive outlook.

"If you consider the overall fiscal position, it's not what you would consider a sustained improvement. Our ratings have a medium-term outlook and they don't change that often," he said.

A Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas official had said that the Philippines would likely merit an improved ratings outlook by major rating agencies this year on the back of recent progress in its fiscal position.

In an interview Friday, BSP executive director for investor relations Renato Pizarro said: "Definitely, all the positive things that happened were providing the basis for the recognition of the efforts that the government had put in."

Aside from the passage of the value-added tax (VAT) reform package, Pizarro said the Philippines had achieved a lot of milestones: the record Bureau of Internal Revenue collections in April; the rising balance-of-payments surplus; the appreciation of the peso against the US dollar; the uptrend in the equity market; declining interest rates, and the strong inflow of migrant remittances.

Rating agencies Standard & Poor's and Moody's Investor Service recently gave the country a sovereign credit rating outlook of "stable," after the downgrades early this year.

In January, S&P cut the Philippines' long-term sovereign foreign currency credit rating by one notch to BB-minus from BB, citing the government's "inadequate" response to its fiscal problems, bringing its debt rating three notches below the much-coveted investment-grade rating.

S&P is sending a team to the country to conduct an onsite assessment from May 30 to June 4.

In February, Moody's slashed its own rating on the Philippines by two notches to B1 from Ba2, warning of heightened vulnerability to eco-

RP RATING/ B3

WHAT'S INSIDE

The day the market died
MR. BEARBULL/B3

Meralco says it will assist BIR in tax collection
/B4

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Fraud to be Filipino

NOTHING can be more funny in media these days than those news reports—and of course those commentaries—putting big business down as being pitiless, greedy and evil.

Well, not exactly. Because frankly, I am having a grand time over media reports on the jueteng scandal, which allegedly involved you know who.

Those jueteng reports already got us into war—well, an "all out" war, no less, at least according to media—against jueteng. Plus other ILLEGAL gambling activities!

Actually, I can settle for the evil-business-empire slant anytime, but war is war, and we have been going to a lot of wars for the longest time now.

Earlier, also according to media reports, we were embroiled in all those many relentless ALL OUT wars against illegal logging, terrorism, lawlessness, tax-evasion, smuggling, mountainous garbage, diseases like TB and dengue, malnutrition, smoke belching, sidewalk vending and even jay-walking.

Nobody has declared a ceasefire or truce in all those wars, and so they must be raging up to now. Although we are probably in a stalemate in our war (also ALL OUT) against poverty.

Aren't you proud to be Filipino?

* * *

ANYWAY, coating the mouths of babes in media these days is the word "fraud," mainly labelled against big business, such as the pre-need company, Pacific Plans.

The owner of the company is the Great Pacific financial group founded by Alfonso Yuchengco, one of the local "taipans," meaning, he is really that big.

Pacific Plans is asking the court to approve a rehabilitation plan, claiming that it could not possibly afford to pay for some 34,000 open-ended education plans.

What with the tuition and other school expenses having gone up in the past 15 years to another planetary system!

For and in behalf of the 34,000 holders of those plans, who are not necessarily the original buyers from Pacific Plans, a small group is making noise all over town.

It is saying that the company should just follow the contracts, which say it should pay for the tuition and other fees, wherever in the galaxy they may be.

I don't know. But I seem to remember that every contract, particularly if it is between the public and any of the evil big business empires, always has an escape clause.

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal

All pre-need education plans, if you look closely, say that the company may just choose to return the money of the holder in case of "fortuitous" events.

Of course, you know what "fortuitous" means. It can be anything—like major change in government policies, such as declaration of war. The real shooting kind, okay!

* * *

STILL, such an escape clause becomes useless if it is proven in court that Pacific Plans actually committed fraud.

Look, boss, this evil empire fooled us, the helpless public!

They are saying that Pacific Plans transferred assets to another company to hide them from those 34,000 holders of the "open-ended" education plans.

Apparently, the "transfer" refers to the move of Pacific Plans some years ago, the spin-off of pre-need products other than the "open-ended" education plans, into a company called Lifetime.

Based on the noise in media, it seems that Pacific Plans transferred its assets to the new company Lifetime, getting only P205 million, when it could have gotten P2.5 billion, at least.

On top of it all, the buyer of Lifetime was another company in the Yuchengco group, called GPL Holdings.

That's a serious accusation, because if it is true, somebody should rot in jail. In effect, they are saying that Pacific Plans stole from the plan holders—big time! By the billions!

In that case, I will drop my call for everybody to be cool in this pre-need crisis, which I have always advocated, because from where I sit, the hotheads will not solve anything.

But if Pacific Plans really stole money, it's also going to be an…well, ALL OUT war.

* * *

THAT big business is being projected as the bad guys in media, is always understandable.

I have been in this racket long enough to know that we always go for the underdog.

In a conflict between the powerless public and the evil big business empire, we always want to air the side of the oppressed.

The question remains: Is this Pacific Plans—owned by a taipan, at that—oppressing the weak and the powerless? Well, I am not too sure about that.

From what I heard, the main issue is the valuation of the Pacific Plans assets (with their corresponding liabilities, of course) that were spun off to Lifetime.

In the first place, if there was any hanky-panky, we should file cases against officials of the SEC. The commission approved the whole thing.

As its official position, the SEC up to now insists that, on the contrary, they saw nothing wrong with the transfer.

SEC officials are saying that the commission approved the transfer, basically, to protect the majority of the customers of Pacific Plans. In short, no fraud!

* * *

BEFORE the Lifetime spin-off, you see, Pacific Plans had more than 400,000 plan holders, including the 34,000 or so "open-ended" education plan holders.

The others were holders of memorial plans, health plans, pension plans, and the "fixed value" education plans.

Back in 1992, Pacific Plan already saw the problem with "open-ended" education plans. Tuition and other school expenses were going up to another solar system.

In fact, Pacific Plans already stopped selling such plans, a full 10 years ahead of the SEC ban that came in 2002.

If the company would collapse due to the "open-ended" education plans, all those 400,000 others (pensioners, for instance) would not get their full benefits.

Pacific Plans thought that such an event would be unfair to the 400,000 holders, who came from the same public as the 34,000 "open-ended" education plan holders.

The SEC agreed.

And so now, is the noisy bunch of "open-ended" plan holders saying that, regardless, everybody should be on the same sinking boat? I thought that would be heartless.

* * *

PRECISELY, the SEC saw the fairness in the "segregation" of the assets of Pacific Plan, because it was based on the amount of contributions from the different pre-need plans.

The argument, saying all plan holders should get hit equally, was not the SEC position.

And so the argument now switches to something like, well, what was wrong was not the transfer, per se, but the "valuation" of the assets in the transfer.

Pacific Plans got P205 million for the assets, or only the "book value," and it could very well have gotten even P2.5 billion. Something like that!

But here's what I gathered: In the exchange between the SEC and Pacific Plans, it was actually agreed that the company was carrying an asset item of some P2.774 billion worth of "unrealized gross profit."

Again, that was "unrealized gross profit." It was not yet in the coffers of the company. It was just a potential profit.

Moreover, it was GROSS profit, meaning, all the expenses that the company would incur to make it into an actual profit, were not yet deducted.

I guess those are the important facts missing in all the noise in media.

* * *

YOU see, pre-need companies like Pacific Plans cannot ever hope to realize all of the "unrealized gross profit."

For one, they sell the plans on instalment. Still, what they stand to earn from those instalment plans, are already booked in the "unrealized gross profit."

Many times, the buyers of those same plans stop paying for them, particularly during hard times like what we have been having since the Asian crisis in 1998.

Also, by the time the pre-need companies realize the potential profit, it would have incurred a lot of expenses linked with the plans, such as the commission for the agents, the servicing of the plan,

BREAKTIME/ B4

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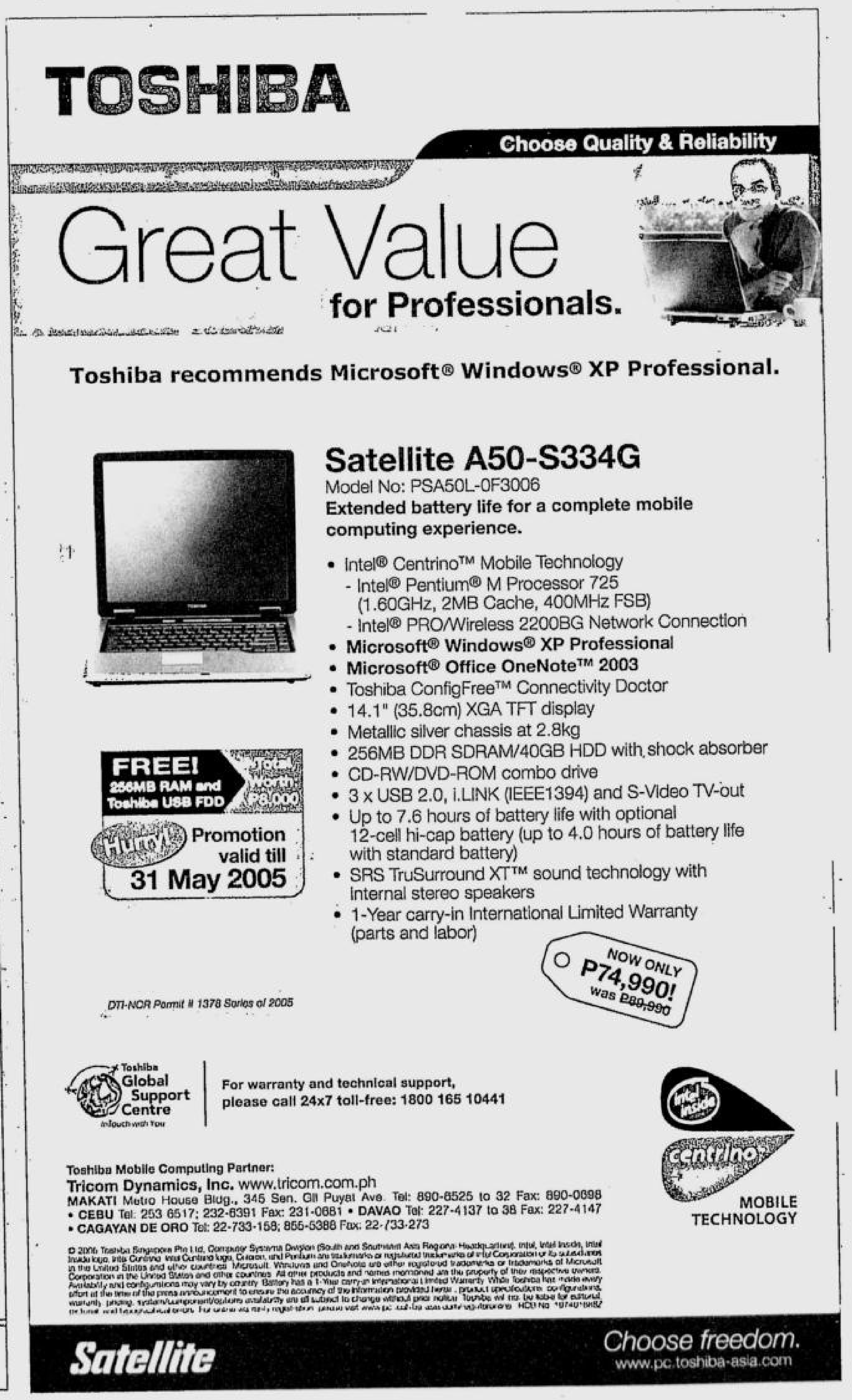

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FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Manulife Financial Corp.	2410	2410	2410	2410	10
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1	1	16,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	142	142	142	142	1,800
Sun Life Financial Inc	1680	1680	1680	1680	280
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	25,000
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.02	1.06	2,910,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	830	835	830	835	5,040
Ipeople Inc.	3.5	3.55	3.4	3.45	296,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.042	0.042	0.042	0.042	500,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.15	3.25	892,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1455	1470	1450	1455	119,520
Ivantage Corp.	0.65	0.68	0.64	0.66	2,070,000
Philweb Corp.	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.016	2,500,000
POWER, ENERGY & OTHER UTILITIES					
Manila Electric Co. A	16	16	15.75	15.75	18,400
Manila Electric Co. B	23.75	23.75	23.25	23.5	455,900
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.1	6.1	6	6.1	990,000
Petron Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.15	3.2	3,283,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	32,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	5,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	2,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	522,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	220,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	60,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.4	3.45	39,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	27.5	28	27.5	28	279,800
Pancake House Inc.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	4,000
San Miguel Corp. A	58	58.5	57.5	58.5	75,100
San Miguel Corp. B	85	85.5	85	85	199,900
Universal Robina Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	65,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.008	0.008	0.0075	0.008	31,000,000
Ayala Corp.	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.8	2,804,000
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.41	300,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.7	613,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	11,600
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.95	0.96	0.94	0.94	4,120,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	400,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.33	740,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.46	2.46	629,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.035	0.035	0.035	0.035	800,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	64,000
Fil-Hispano Holdings Corp.	7.8	8	7.8	8	349,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	44	44.5	44	44.5	35,200
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	300,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.085	0.085	0.085	0.085	100,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.24	1.26	1.24	1.26	141,000
Ionics Inc.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	8,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	185,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.32	1.36	1.32	1.36	4,384,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.35	5,150,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	4,660,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	30,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.86	0.86	10,000
Sm Investments Corp.	247	248	247	248	81,550
South China Resources Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	50,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.165	0.17	0.165	0.17	700,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.215	0.215	500,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Active Alliance Inc.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	10,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.2	1.26	1.2	1.26	120,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	100,000
Pryce Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	1.1	1.12	1.1	1.12	2,011,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.32	1.34	1.3	1.34	1,307,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	18,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	410,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	54,100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	5,800
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	3,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7.2	7.3	7.2	7.3	2,109,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	620,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.36	0.36	320,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.5	1.44	1.44	7,888,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	100,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	20,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.85	4.85	3,000
SM Development Corp.	1.5	1.56	1.5	1.5	59,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.4	1,262,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.007	0.0075	0.007	0.007	55,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	4.05	4.05	3.95	4	90,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.3	1,620,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	10,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	29,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.018	0.019	0.018	0.019	5,700,000
Omico Corp.	0.006	0.0065	0.006	0.0065	11,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.82	0.82	0.81	0.81	400,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.95	0.95	0.93	0.94	4,470,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	29.5	29.5	28	28.5	1,235,500
OIL					
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	10,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	2.48	2.48	2.48	2.48	190,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	2,500,000

The day the market died

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

LAST week, I was in an introspective mood and took time out to pause and take stock of my disappointments. This is usually known as a midlife crisis or men-o-pause. Women also go through this when their whore moans decline, and their boobs look like bananas (*saging*). In an effort to turn back the clock, they resort to liposuction, botox injections, cheek implants and facelifts by OTIS. They no longer call it, liposuction, waist disposal sounds better.

I bet that all those people engaged in jueteng are jueteng their pants at the moment. There's a lotto them around.

Two friends just returned from Boracay. They went swimming in the sea, probably swallowed some seawater and came back with diarrhea. The tourism secretary said that out of 500 establishments, 160 did not have proper sewage disposal so E-coli might again be present. The French do not mind as they call each other mon sewer and the Germans will take a stab at anything. I feel that Boracay should have a national emblem. How about the E-cauliflower?

Did you read the true story about Wendy's in America? A lady found a well-manicured finger in her bowl of chili. Naturally, she was very distressed and the story was in all the newspapers, on every TV station and the Jay Leno show. Wendy's sales fell sharply, staff were laid off while others worked shorter hours. The company offered $100,000 reward for information and eventually discovered that a friend of the victim, who had lost a finger in an industrial accident, had put it into her chili. She has been charged with attempted grand theft. For those conversant with Omar Khayam:

The moving finger writes, and having writ, moves on.

But I think it very silly if it ends up in the chili.

The INQUIRER has now issued all its journalists with masks obtained from The Phantom of the Opera. It is supposed to fit over the face, but I think a masked ball would be more appropriate.

* * *

I am supposed to write about the stock market but last week was extremely boring. On Monday, the PSE computer did not come online until 11 a.m., and to everyone's surprise, the market closed after 1 hour. There were silly rumors that the cable to the computer had melted in the intense heat. Others suspected it had been sabotaged to prevent the PHISIX from reaching 1820. Anyway, in this short period of time, nearly P1 billion worth of business was transacted.

In the following 4 days, the market was opened for the usual 2-1/2 hours, and gross turnover on each day was less than on Monday. So clearly, there is no point in staying open for more than 1 hour. We should follow the example of the FIJI stock exchange, which opens for 1 hour at 10:30 a.m. every Tuesday

MR. BEARBULL/ B4

RP . . .

From page B1

nomic, financial and political shocks due to ballooning public debts.

London-based credit rating agency Fitch Ratings spared the Philippines from a debt-rating downgrade in its last assessment in November, but changed its outlook to "negative" from "stable" due to heightened concerns on fiscal vulnerability.

A negative outlook means a downgrade may still be possible in the near term while a stable outlook means the current rating will likely stay in the near-term.

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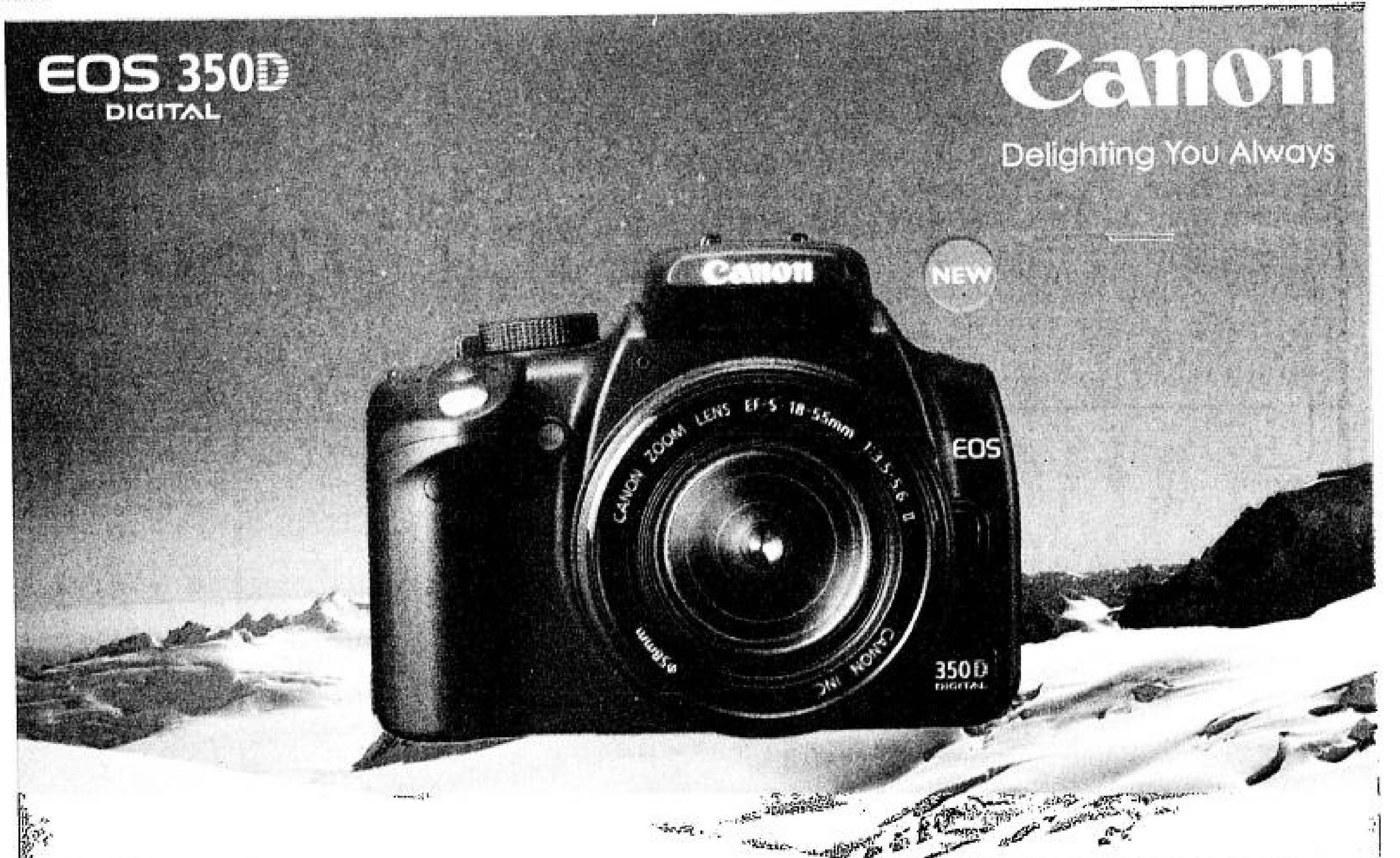

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DISCLOSURES

F & J Prince Holding Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on July 18, 3 p.m. at the Function Room 7, 34/F Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo De Roxas, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of June 20 will be entitled to vote at the meeting.

***

THE PHILODRILL Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 29, 3 p.m. at La Colina Room, Valle Verde Country Club, Capt. H. Javier St., Bo. Oranbo, Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of April 15 will be entitled to notice and vote at the meeting.

***

RFM Corp. postponed its annual stockholders' meeting previously scheduled on June 29.

***

SAN Miguel Corp. confirms a PDI news article that the company is targeting a P300 billion sales this year on an annual basis inclusive of sales generated by expansion, acquisition and joint ventures.

***

IVANTAGE Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 24, 2 p.m. at Batanes Function Room, Edsá Shangri-la, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City. Stockholders of record as of May 24 will be entitled to notice and vote at the meeting. ***Compiled by: Erika A. Sarmiento, PDI Research***

CURRENCIES

May 23, 2005 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.78814628	1.000000	54.4660
Japan	Yen	0.007373	0.009355	0.5095
United Kingdom	Pound	1.451056	1.841100	100.2774
Hongkong	Dollar	0.101122	0.128304	6.9882
Switzerland	Franc	0.647614	0.821693	44.7543
Canada	Dollar	0.62591	0.794155	43.2544
Singapore	Dollar	0.477867	0.606318	33.0237
Australia	Dollar	0.598532	0.759417	41.3624
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.090629	2.652590	144.4760
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.210173	0.266667	14.5243
Brunei	Dollar	0.476423	0.604485	32.9239
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000106	0.0058
Thailand	Baht	0.019769	0.025083	1.3662
UAE	Dirham	0.214596	0.272279	14.8299
Euro	Euro	1	1.268800	69.1065
Argentina	Peso	0.273187	0.346620	18.8790
Brazil	REAL	0.320606	0.406785	22.1560
Denmark	Kroner	0.13428	0.170375	9.2796
India	Rupee	0.018148	0.023026	1.2541
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.207435	0.263193	14.3351
Mexico	New Peso	0.072092	0.091470	4.9820
New Zealand	Dollar	0.560918	0.711693	38.7631
Norway	Kroner	0.123194	0.156309	8.5135
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013249	0.016810	0.9156
South Africa	Rand	0.12326	0.156392	8.5180
Korea	Won	0.000786	0.000997	0.0543
Sweden	Kroner	0.108958	0.138246	7.5297
Syria	Pound	0.015183	0.019264	1.0492
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025148	0.031908	1.7379
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000367	0.000466	0.0254

₱360B needed to head off power crisis, says DOE

By Abigail L. Ho

TO AVERT a power crisis, the country needs at least P359.9 billion in investments for new capacity in the three main grids beginning this year up to 2014.

In Luzon alone, P256.5 billion would have to be infused from 2008 to 2014 just to generate 7,200 megawatts (MW) of additional capacity, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said.

The amount does not include the necessary investment for transmission uprating projects that will have to be implemented to address transmission constraints, particularly from the South Luzon supply areas to the Metro Manila and other Luzon load centers, he added.

As of end-2004, the Luzon grid posted a peak demand of 6,728 MW, with dependable capacity placed at 11,086 MW.

Peak demand for the Luzon grid is expected to rise to 7,343 MW this year, to 9,372 MW in 2008 and to 14,959 MW in 2014. This translates to an average annual growth rate of almost 8.2 percent.

In the Visayas grid, some P25.8 billion in new investments would have to be infused from 2008 to 2014 to add another 600 MW in capacity to the entire grid, Lotilla said.

Right now, parts of the Visayas grid are already experiencing rotating brownouts due either to lack of capacity or transmission constraints.

Last year, the Visayas grid registered a peak demand of 1,063 MW. It had an installed capacity of 1,721 MW and a dependable capacity of 1,520 MW.

Peak demand here is seen growing at an average annual growth rate of 5.7 percent, rising to 1,113 MW this year, 1,308 MW in 2008 and 1,849 MW in 2014.

Mindanao has the greatest need for new capacity. Some P77.6 billion in new capital has to be invested in the grid from 2005 to 2014 to prevent a power crisis.

"Immediate measures must be undertaken for Mindanao," he said. "This becomes more urgent because of the impending El Niño."

The Mindanao grid last year had a peak demand of 1,278 MW, hovering close to its dependable capacity of 1,402 MW and installed capacity of 1,665 MW.

By this year, peak demand in the grid is seen to go up to 1,371 MW. This will grow even further to 1,615 MW by 2008 and to 2,256 MW by 2014, representing an average annual growth rate of 5.9 percent.

Meralco says it will assist BIR in tax collection

THE MERALCO Electric Company yesterday denied a report that it owes the Bureau of Internal Revenue P4 billion.

"Meralco merely serves the role of a withholding agent in the collection of taxes arising from the refund, and that the tax due will come from companies who will receive the said refund," said Elpi Cuna Jr., Meralco vice president for Corporate Communication.

"The refund of our corporate clients will be treated as part of their company income and, that being the case, it is obvious that it is not Meralco's income that is under scrutiny and is subject to tax here," Cuna said in a statement.

Also it is not true that the BIR is running after Meralco for unpaid taxes, Cuna said.

"Our company is even helping the BIR in its task of tax collection," he said. "In fact, the bureau has issued a regulation requiring Meralco to withhold 25-percent tax on refunds for industrial and commercial customers with active accounts. Refunds, meanwhile, for customers in the same class but with terminated accounts would be subject to 32-percent tax. Hence, there is no intended delay on the part of Meralco in remitting to the BIR taxes yet to be withheld."

Cuna also insisted that the company has been very responsible in the payment of its taxes. It has, in fact, been consistently cited as one of the biggest corporate income tax payers.

Meralco has filed with the BIR its claim for refund or tax credit of over P7 billion, representing the company's excess payments for income tax for the taxable years 1994-1998 and 2000-2001.

This is because of the company's reduced revenues for the stated years, following the Supreme Court's refund order. The income tax Meralco originally paid to the BIR for the said years was actually much more than the income tax actually due as a result of lower revenues.

DTI mulls over ₱3-B bond offer to fund infra works

By Ronnel W. Domingo

TRADE SECRETARY Juan B. Santos yesterday said his department was looking at ways to raise as much as P5 billion for the National Development Co.'s infrastructure projects.

Santos, who was a guest during a forum on infrastructure stakeholders hosted by the Makati Business Club, said the Department of Trade and Industry was considering an NDC bond offer of between P3 billion and P5 billion.

"Another [option] is the sale of NDC's real property worth between P2 billion and P3 billion," the official said.

A third option, he said, was for the national government to set aside a portion of proceeds from the privatization of assets for NDC's budget.

"We are going to talk with Finance Secretary Cesar V. Purisima on how we may be able to go about that," Santos said.

A slate of NDC's infrastructure projects are supposed to be carried out through its subsidiary, the Philippine Infrastructure Corp.

Last month, a government source said NDC-PIC had lined up four new road projects worth P30 billion as part of its portfolio of priority projects seen to boost economic development.

According to the source, the projects included the P12-billion North Luzon East Expressway, the P9-billion Calabarzon expressway, the extension of the yet-to-be-built Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway, and the 10-kilometer Circumferential Road 6 in Pasig City.

91-day T-bill . . .

From page B1

Bids for the three-month government securities reached P8.12 billion, or more than four times the government's offering of P2 billion for each maturity. Tenders for the six-month debt paper stood at P10.2 billion, while bids for the one-year bills reached P8.93 billion.

The strong appetite of the local market prompted the Bureau of Treasury's auction committee to accept P2.8 billion worth of bids for the 182-day bills, and another P2.8 billion for the 364-day paper, thus going beyond the government's original debt offering.

Cruz said the drop in interest rates was still controlled, since the latest rates still did not fall below the 5- to 6-percent target inflation for the year. Inflation, however, has already breached the 8-percent mark in the first four months of the year.

"It still looks like banks still have self-control despite their high liquidity. Because if they don't, they would have bid each other out, thus forcing rates to go down by at least 50 basis points," Cruz said.

Mr. Bearbull

From page B3

and Thursday. Then I could sleep late.

Yesterday, the net turnover excluding cross sales fell to an unheard of P292 million, the lowest figure for two years. My computer linked to the PSE trading floor fell asleep twice and had to be rebooted where it hertz. ICU got this joke.

Perhaps as a result of my comments last week, SEMIRARA published its 1st quarter results on Friday. They were better than we had been led to expect. One important customer was closed for maintenance repair for an unusually long period, but SCC was able to sell its coal elsewhere. Earnings per share for the first 3 months were P1.22 but I am not recommending it. Once bitten, twice shy.

The PSE asked DMC for the quarterly report and by the time you read my article, it might already be out. DMC is heavily dependent on SCC for its profits.

The price of crude oil has fallen by $10 a barrel from its peak and at last the oil companies have reduced their prices by 75 centavos a liter. This will help ease inflation and reduce the cost of imports, at least for the time being.

For the first time in 4 years, we had a surplus of P3.3 billion due to higher collections by the BIR. They are now going after the movie and TV stars that pay 0 to 1.5 percent of their income. Maybe the lateral attrition bill will work after all. We are no longer worried about being compared to Argentina and we are hopeful of having our rating upgraded from stable to positive.

Despite this favorable turn of events, the market remains listless in low turnover. Investors are not yet convinced that the VAT bill will raise anything like what is needed as most of the extra tax will be deferred until next January. So far, the President has not signed it into law. Perhaps she does not feel that it is worth the effort. In the meantime, we have simply mirrored the movements of Wall Street but on a much lesser scale. For the moment, the DOW looks as if it has run out of momentum so we will probably continue to drift lower.

The government's excise tax on cigarettes was increased last January. Instead of an increase in revenue, the tax collection mysteriously declined 22 percent from P5.51 million to P4.29 billion. Unless half the population has given up smoking, which I do not believe, the BIR will have to implement a tighter monitoring system on their factory operations. No butts.

The market is going to remain under a cloud until the wage dispute is settled. No way will the workers get P125 a day. It looks as if the government will avoid the issue by suggesting it be resolved at the local level.

PLDT is still trying to acquire a TV station, preferably GMA Network, but the companies have not yet agreed on a valuation for a 66-percent stake. However, talks are continuing. PLDT is also in talks with ECHOSTAR with a view to investing $85 million to provide direct-to-home television. I hope this means satellite TV, which would send out pictures of a higher quality provided you have a digital TV.

SMC is planning to bid for Del Monte Pacific listed in Singapore, and also New Zealand Dairy Foods. Next year, it will probably bid for COCA-COLA, PEPSI COLA and BUDWEISER. That reminds me that in American schools, students are taught "write i before e except after BUDWEISER."

Alan Greenspan made himself unpopular by saying a modest revaluation of the yuan would not solve America's trade deficit because the disparity in wages and therefore production costs was of a magnitude of 10. Other countries such as Vietnam, South Korea and Thailand would simply fill the gap.

The Russian tennis stars met last week. There was KOURNIKOVA, HECHANOVA, KUTSENOVA and SHARAPOVA accompanied by their 10-pin bowling champion KNOCKEMOVA. *mrbearbull@hotmail.com*

Breaktime

From page B2

and other administrative expenses.

Finally, as the pre-need company collects on the instalment plans, the SEC requires it to make a contribution to the trust fund. That is taken from the "unrealized gross profit."

As a matter of fact, by 2004, because of the SEC requirement for higher contribution to the trust fund, the book value of Lifetime has gone down to less than the selling price (i.e. "book value") of P205 million.

Does that mean to any of you that the new owner of Lifetime, GPL Holdings, made a killing from the asset "transfer?" Look. Lifetime's net worth even dropped.

* * *

BUT here is the main thing. According to SEC rules, in fairness to all the holders of different pre-need plans, Pacific Plans should have separate trust funds (i.e. assets) for each line of business.

And yet based on the noise going on, the company supposedly "spirited away" its assets, possibly referring to the Lifetime spin-off.

In the first place, based on SEC rules, the "open-ended" education plans had nothing to do with those assets.

From the beginning, the SEC precisely told Pacific Plans to set aside the assets that belonged to the trust fund of those 400,000 or so plan holders.

I thought the SEC did well. Of course the noisy guys would never say that. They would only insist on fraud as the typical Pinoy big business strategy. Sad.

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Mandaluyong City

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

To All PICPA Members:

In accordance with the provision of Article XII, Section I of the By-Laws of the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants, notice is hereby given that the Special Meeting of Members will be held on Friday, June 10, 2005 at 6:00 p.m., Mediterranean Room, Waterfront Hotel & Casino, Lahug, Cebu City, purposely to present for approval the amendments to the By-Laws of the Institute in compliance with the provisions of The Accountancy Law of 2004, Republic Act No. 9298 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Proof of Required Notice of Meeting
3. Determination of Quorum.
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. President's Report
6. Presentation of the amended By-Laws of PICPA in compliance with the requirements of the R.A. No. 9298 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations
7. Approval of the amended By-Laws
8. Adjournment

We urge all members to attend this Special Meeting of Members. If you cannot be present in person during the meeting, please accomplish and return to us the attached general proxy form. (Copies of the proxy form may be obtained through the local chapter or at http://www.picpa.com.ph.)

Antonio V. Cruz
National Secretary

Federal Tyres: Performance, progressive styling and value

IN THE wake of rising fuel prices, the Filipino motorist will now be subject to the painful process of classifying and prioritizing automobile related spending. Strange to note, however, that even in these trying times, it appears that most Filipino automobile owners still have the tenacity to upgrade their cars in whatever means possible. Whether it be for cosmetic or performance reasons, it is obvious that Filipinos like their cars to look good and function optimally as well.

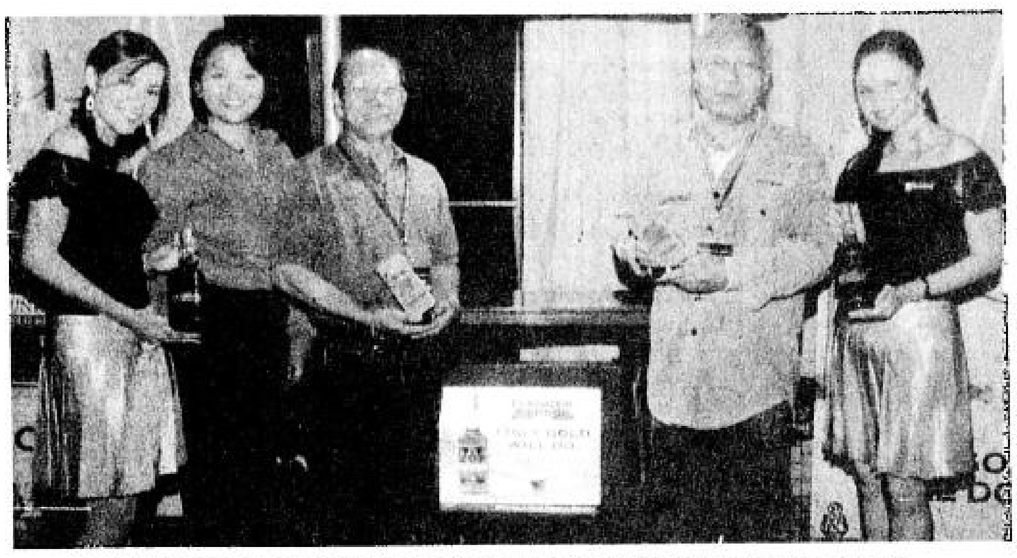
A visit to the Transport-Show will surely make the car enthusiast swoon with delight (or envy?) with the slew of aftermarket parts and accessories in the market today, your ever-shrinking disposable income will make you think twice the next time you purchase something for your only pride and joy. Will you opt for aesthetics or performance? Let's talk about tires. This integral piece will actually contribute to your cars overall driving performance and looks - that is, if you choose carefully. Ideally, such a tire should provide both. It only follows that high-end products come at high prices but fortunately for us, there is a better alternative for our tire requirements. Unless you were living under a rock for the past decade, then you've never heard of Federal Tyres. Federal Tyres is a globally renowned brand currently enjoying numerous international awards.

Federal Tyres manufactures all its tires with TTIC in mind. TTIC stands for "Total Tire-Tech Integration Concept" which is basically a revolutionary take on tire-making techniques. Over the past 51 years, Federal Tyre engineers have taken advantage of the progress of material science which has evolved into a great innovation in tire design. TTIC combines 3 major theories namely: new belt construction, new bead reinforcement and new thread design. The practical application of the 3 theories breaks through traditional design methods in the whole of tire history. With TTIC 3-in-1 Theory in mind, each engineering effort is called upon to meet the specific goals of effectively controlling belt tension, increased bead durability, increased grasp power on the surface of dry road or water dispersion capability on wet road. Federal Tyres have applied TTIC on its whole tire line-up (passenger car radials, truck & bus radial, light truck, recreational and light van radial).

Federal Tyre owners enjoy the "performance-design" because of the optimized tire casing shape, tread design materials and construction based on performance needs. With the breakthrough "rim-guard", an even fit between the tire bead and wheel rim is achieved. Hence, rims are protected from brushing against curb and sidewalks accidentally. Lastly, aesthetic conscious individuals will be glad to know that TTIC encourages progressive styling with the latest development in pattern, shoulder, and symbol design.

Be assured with a globally renowned brand that advocates superior engineering, quality and progressive styling to boot. More importantly, Federal Tyres are far more affordable than other high-end tires it is at par with. Now that value for your money.

For particulars and distributorship inquiries, you may contact, Private Products Corp at 724-1745, 724-1751, 724-1798, 724-1805, 724-1806, 724-2207, 724-4962, 724-1849 (fax), 724-2206 (fax). E-mail: caippc@mydestiny.net

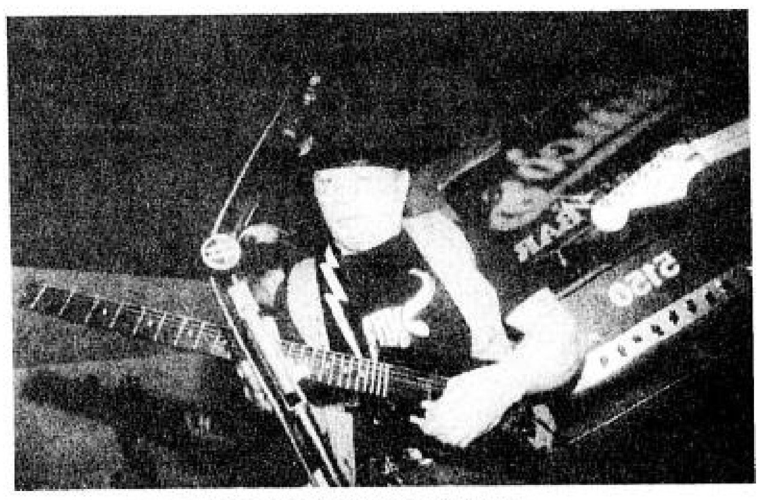


FUNDADOR GOLD RESERVE RECOGNIZES MEN OF EXCELLENCE

After bestowing the Golden Excellence Awards to outstanding members of the Philippine Jaycee Senate and Kiwanis International late last year, Fundador Gold Reserve recently awarded three outstanding members of the Philippine Institute of Architects (PIA) - the first and the oldest professional and architectural organization in Asia - during the 72nd PIA Convention at Le Pavilion. Honored that evening were architect Orlando Villarin, current president of the Philippine Institute of Architects; architect Angelito Antonio, PIA district director for Southern Luzon; and architect Delfin Pantangco Jr, vice president for Administrative Affairs of the PIA. Shown in the photo are Patricia Yatco, Fundador Gold Reserve brand manager (2nd from left), who led the awarding rites and awardees architect Villarin and architect Pantangco (3rd and 4th from left) with the fundador reserve ladies.

Vaseline Academic Awards

EDUCATION is a right of everyone, but during these days of hardship education simply becomes more of a privilege than a right. And because of this, Unilever Philippines through Vaseline Academic Awards came up with an activity that will recognize and give importance to Filipino student's achievement. Recipient of these awards are the top notch graduates and honorable mentions of some of Metro Manila's biggest Public High School. They are chosen simply because of their remarkable achievement of despite economic conditions they still finished their secondary education with the highest honors. For three years now, Vaseline Academic Awards has been successfully and constantly giving recognition. The project kicked-off last academic year 2002-2003 and have given special recognition to more than 5,000 Filipino students to date. This does not only give recognition to students but it also aims to inspire the future generation to work hard in achieving academic excellence. For academic year 2004-2005, Vaseline Healthy Glow Shampoo increased it's number of awardees from the usual 20 to 50 Public High Schools in Metro Manila. As early as March 2005, the Vaseline Team has been preparing for the activity. Special academic pins, gold and silver medals were specially produced for the recipients. Apart from this, certificates of recognition and Vaseline Healthy Glow Shampoo gift packs were given to all awardees.



TRIBUTE TO PINOY ROCK AND ROLL

Witness rare Pinoy Rock on May 26, Thursday at Party Central Mother Ignacia, Quezon City. Pinoy rock and roll legend Mike Hanopol lights up the stage with Mr. Jeproks: Mike Hanopol. Mr. Jeproks himself relieves Pinoy rock that promises to bring you back to the roots of hard core Filipino music. Expect the rocking rendition of 'Rak en Roll sa Ulan', 'Beep beep', 'Balong Malalim' and the phenomenal 'Himig Natin', as popularized by the infamous Juan Dela Cruz Band. Rock again breaks into mainstream as the music industry prepares for the much awaited reunion of Pinoy Rock's very own Juan Dela Cruz Band set to break walls on June 11, at the World Trade Center. This event is aptly entitled 'Ang Pagkalas: The Juan Dela Cruz Band Reunion'. This event is being brought to us by Party Central, Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation, YES FM and NU 107.5.

36th National Marketing Convention gathers experts

JOIN the 36th National Marketing Convention (NMC) to be held on May 25 and 26 at the Westin Philippine Plaza and take on the extreme marketing challenge.

International and local marketing authorities are set to share their world view and insights gained from their rich experience in the marketing field. Among them are Hermawan Kartajaya, president of World Marketing Association (WMA); Gavin Coombes, vice-president of Euro RSCG Asia Pacific; Bienvenido Policarpio, executive vice-president of Prudential Group of Companies/president Dale Carnegie Phils; Joselito Ortega, chair and COO, BrandLab Inc; Jose Jesus Roces, Asian Institute of Management professor and Asia Pacific Marketing Federation president; Tomas Victor Mendoza, SAVP, Banco De Oro Universal Bank; Carlos Ejercito, president and COO, United Laboratories Inc; Mark Yambot, director for Corporate Affairs, Microsoft Phils Inc; Luke Tan, director, investor relation, Megaworld; Christopher Bezu, SVP and regional director, Asia Pacific Adidas-Salomon AG; Grace Magno, head of marketing, Araneta Group of Companies; Nicanor Gabunada, SVP for integrated sales and marketing ABS-CBN Broadcasting Company.

With the theme "Extreme Marketing Challenge: The Road to Convergence," the event will explore how today's marketers can navigate their brands towards excellence. Topics to be tackled on Day 1 include: Business Philosophy for Extreme Marketing: Pushing Your Limits in a Crisis Economy; Customer Relationship Management: Building Technology to the Extreme; Pain Makes Gains: Pharmaceutical Companies Going Beyond Pain; The New Empire: Shaping the Future of High-Rise Condominiums; and Challenging Global Brands Through Sports Marketing Events. Meanwhile, Day 2 will feature Mega Formulas for Extreme Marketing from a Marketing Guru; The Telecommunications Convergence: Challenge to the Extreme; Advertising Convergence: Bringing Filipino Consumers Closer to the brand Through Humor; The New Imperative in Today's Convergence in Marketing: Sustainable Growth; Mall Mania: Shop Until You Drop; New Rules in Market Leadership: Success Stories in Non-traditional Bank Marketing; Creativity on the Edge: Media and Marketing Convergence and Road to Recovery through Marketing Convergence; and The Road to Recovery through Market Convergence.

The Philippine Marketing Association is a member of the Asia Pacific Marketing Federation and World Marketing Association. With the theme this year of "Marketing Convergence" the organization prepares marketing professionals to merge traditional and contemporary as well as eastern and western thoughts, which in essence is marketing convergence.

For inquiries on the limited slots available, please call the Philippine Marketing Association secretariat at telephone numbers 634-4890; 634-5722; and 636-1451 or email pma@philonline.com.

NEW YORK LIFE INSURANCE
(PHILIPPINES), INC
Fund Management signing with
ING INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT
March 8, 2005

NYL PHILIPPINES SIGNS FUND MANAGEMENT DEAL WITH ING

New York Life Insurance (Philippines) Inc (NYL Phils) has signed a contract with ING at the NYL Phils head office in Makati City. The contract designates ING as NYL Philippines' fund manager for its 'unit-linked' or investment linked product, which was launched in April. Shown in photo are George May, NYL Phils president and CEO (center, left) shaking hands with Cesar Zulueta, ING managing director for Investment Management. Looking on are (from from left): Irene Diomampo, ING trust officer; Ken Ramirez, NYL Phils SVP for agency distribution; and Rebecca B. de la Cruz, NYL Phils VP and CFO.

ROTARY CENTENNIAL DISTRICT 3830 CONFERENCE

District governor Tony Quila and Rotary International director and president's representative Genshitsu Sen lead the formal opening of the Rotary Window exhibit at PICC on the first day of Discon 2005. Joining in the ribbon cutting are overall conference chair Mayor Jojo Binay and Rotary Window chair Helen Prats. Witnessing the event are other district officers (from left, back row) Paul Magno, Joe Alejandro, Puno Pena, Dick Funk and Jonny Carlos.

BITS Clips

McDo B-day packages

IF YOUR child will be celebrating his birthday on or before May 31, get his party started with McDonald's latest Birthday Party Packages. On top of the usual party goodies that go with its party packages, McDonald's is giving away four kinds of special play sets. A party food bill of P6,000 to P7,999 gets the celebrant a McDonald's 37-piece Deluxe Mealtime Set. A bill for P8,000 to P9,999 earns him a McDonald's Dress-Up Set while a party bill of P10,000 to P11,999 sets him up for a McDonald's Cash Register. If you belong to a big family and pick up a tab of P12,000 or higher, your child's a winner of a McDonald's Drive Thru Play Restaurant. These play sets are given free to the celebrant at his McDonald's birthday party.

'Help Build a Shrine' promo

BY SIMPLY purchasing columbarium vaults from Magnificat Ventures Corp, you can help build the Shrine of St. Therese of the Child Jesus. You also get a chance to win a brand new Honda Jazz and other exciting prizes in the "Jazz a Vault Away, Help Build a Shrine" promo. Previous buyers and current vault owners with current accounts as well as new buyers may join the raffle promo. Those who want to participate in this ecclesiastical cause and buy a columbarium vault can pay either in cash or by installment. P1,000 entitles purchasers to 1 raffle ticket; bonus raffle tickets are also given away, depending on the buyer's choice of payment terms. There is no limit to the number of prizes a participant can win during the predraw on Oct. 1 and the grand draw on Jan. 2, 2006. The opening of the shrine is targeted for the first quarter of 2006. For inquiries, contact Magnificat Ventures Corp at 635-4680, 635-4527, and 636-6279; fax no. 687-1477; site tel. no. 853-9187; (0917) 890-4342.

Academy of Dentistry meet

THE ACADEMY of Dentistry International, Republic of the Philippines Section recently held its 1st Regular Quarterly Meeting last May 18, at the Executive Lounge of United Laboratories Inc in Mandaluyong City. The event featured progress reports from academy officers and committee chairpersons, and a lecture on "Endodontics" by active member D Huminada Viloria. The meeting was sponsored by Unilab Inc through Westmont Pharmaceuticals Inc represented by Dennis Fulgencio.

MSI-DIGILAND INKS PARTNERSHIP WITH HP, VERITAS

MSI-Digiland, the country's leading IT distributor recently signed a partnership with backup storage leaders HP and Veritas, making MSI-Digiland the exclusive distributor of the HP-Veritas Perfect Fit Bundle in the Philippines. The HP-Veritas Perfect Fit Bundle is a super value combination designed to simplify the management of backup. Every purchase of HP StorageWorks solutions comes with a Veritas Backup Exec Software. Promo runs until June 30. Present during the signing are: (front) HP product manager for network storage and solutions Eula Cruz; MSI-Digiland president Jimmy Go; Veritas general manager for business development (South Asia) Darric Horr; (back) Veritas country sales manager Al dela Cruz; Veritas commercial business manager for South Asia Sabrina Tan and MSI-Digiland product manager for Veritas Archie dela Cruz.

GOLDILOCKS WINS SUPERBRAND AWARD

Goldilocks Bakeshop Inc was one of 56 companies recently named as one of the country's 'Superbrands'. The honor is given to deserving trademarks that have achieved formidable success in terms of recall, market reach, reputation, and overall strength. For the past 38 years, Goldilocks has established itself as the country's number one bakeshop, consistently leading market surveys in terms of brand awareness, customer traffic, and product preference. Currently, the company has 183 branches both here and abroad

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LEGAL

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late EPIFANIA G. RODILLO UMALI a parcel of land lot no. 09 GLRO Record No. 7681 TCT RT 117261 (50664) containing an area of 240 sqm situated at No. 7 Scout Alcaraz St. La Loma, QC has been extrajudicially settled with waiver of shares among her heirs as per Doc. No. 245 Page No. 64 Book No. 09 Series of 2001 before Att. Erlich V. Barraquias of Quezon City PDI - May 17, 24 & 31,2005

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNIT MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROJECT
NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Regional Office 13 (Caraga)

nzaid
New Zealand's International Aid & Development Agency

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Economic and Development Authority Regional Office 13 (Caraga)- Local Government Unit Management Training Project, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites consulting firms to apply for eligibility and shortlisting and if found eligible and shortlisted to bid for the hereunder services:

Title : Training Consulting Services

Brief Description : The Training Consulting Firm (TCF) shall (a) conduct TNA i.e.; assess training needs of local government units and local training/service institutions in the Caraga region; (b)conduct conference/meetings with local institutions providing training services to LGUs and assist in the development and implementation of a plan to organize a pool of local service providers; (c) design and pre-test project and program development and management training courses/modules, package and pre-test training manuals, templates and guidebooks; (d) conduct project and program development and management training for selected LGUs and institutions in the Caraga region; as well as (e)facilitate the drafting, finalization and packaging of LGU project studies for presentations to local development councils and other investors.

Approved Budget for the Contract : PhP1,658,800
Source of Funding : New Zealand Agency for International Development Grant for LGUMTP
Contract Duration : 5.5 months (Services need to be completed by 15 December 2005)

The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Eligibility Form. Eligibility of prospective bidders shall be checked using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Shortlisting of eligible consultants will be done based on the following criteria: experience of the consultant, qualification of personnel, current workload and financial standing. Only five eligible bidders shall make up the shortlist. The evaluation procedure to be adopted shall be Quality based Evaluation (QBE).

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is as follows:

	Activities	Schedule/Deadline
1.	Submission of Letters of Intent and Application for Eligibility	31 May 2005
2.	Issuance of Eligibility Forms	18 May-1 June 2005
3.	Submission of Eligibility Requirements	3 June 2005
4.	Results of Eligibility Check	7 June 2005
5.	Results of Short Listing	8 June 2005
6.	Issuance of Bid Documents	8-9 June 2005
7.	Pre-bid Conference	10 June 2005

The Eligibility Screening Form will be available at LGUMTP-NEDA Caraga Office, Nimfa Tiu Building, J. Rosales Ave., Butuan City Tel. Nos. (085)3420181/3425774, Fax Nos. (85) 3602055/8150308 Email: nzaidlgumtp_neda@yahoo.com upon payment of a non-refundable amount of PhP1,000.00 to the NEDA Caraga cashier. Submission and results of eligibility shall be in the same office. For further enquiries contact, Ms. Lurraine Baybay Villacorta, LGUMTP Project Director.

Bid documents will be available only to the shortlisted bidders upon payment of PhP1, 000.00 to the NEDA Caraga cashier.

LGUMTP-NEDA Caraga assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of bid.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) CARMENCITA S. COCHINGCO
Regional Director

(PDI - May 17 & 24, 2005)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Provincial Government of Isabela

The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) of the Province of Isabela invites interested bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following requirements and supplies:

Date and Time & Place of Bidding	Item Description	Allocated Budget
July 1, 2005, 10:00 A.M. Capitol Building, Alibagu Ilagan, Isabela	Drugs and Medicines/Medical Supplies	P23 Million
	Veterinary, Janitorial, Office, Electrical and Firefighting Supplies; & Office Equipment	P 7 Million
	Hospital Equipment/Surgical Instruments	P 5 Million

Contract Duration : Four (4) months from the date of award
Delivery Period : Fifteen (15) Calendar days

NOTE : A Pre-bidding Conference will be held on June 20, 2005 at 10:00 o'clock in the morning at the Governor's Mini-Conference Hall, Capitol Building, Alibagu, Ilagan, Isabela.

Complete sets of Application form for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be obtained from the BAC Secretariat's Office, Capitol Building, Alibagu, Ilagan Isabela, upon payment of a non-refundable amount of THREE THOUSAND PESOS (Php3,000.00), Philippine Currency to the Provincial Treasurer's Office, starting June 15, 2005. No bid documents will be issued 3 days before the date of bidding.

Bids will be received at the assigned Bidding Room on the date and time specified above after which Eligibility Requirements and Bid Proposals will be opened in the presence of attending bidders.

All particulars to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. No. 9184 and its implementing Rules and Regulations.

The Province of Isabela reserves the right to reject any or all bids at any time prior to award of contract waive any defects therein, and accept the offer most advantageous to the government, without thereby incurring any of the following: (a) liability whatsoever to offset expenses or losses the bidder may incur in the preparation of the bids and (b) obligation to inform the affected bidder/s of the grounds for the basis of the BAC's action.

(Sgd.) MA. THERESA A. FLORES
Chairperson, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–May 24 & 31, 2005)

PUBLIC NOTICES

AUCTION SALE

FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP INC.,1137 P. Gil St. Paco, Mla. Will sell all expired pledges of October and November 2004 on June 5, 2005, Sunday at 10:00a.m. Sons of J. Lanuza Auctioneer.
(PDI - May 24, 2005)

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Most Rev. Lucilo B. Quiambao, D.D.,
The Clergy, the Religious Men and Women
and the Faithful of the Diocese of Legazpi

CONGRATULATE

His Excellency, Most Rev.
Nestor Celestial Cariño, D.D.

In his Canonical Installation as the Fifth Bishop
of the Diocese of Legazpi, May 24, 2005,
Cathedral of St. Gregory the Great, Legazpi City

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Nigos, 98

ROMANA CRISTINA SORIANO Nigos of Brgy. Bungro, Luna, La Union passed away last Sunday, May 22, 2005 at the age of 98. She was born on Oct. 1, 1906.

Romana Cristina is survived by children Ricardo and Angelita, Flora, Amado and Dominga, Sotero (+), Patricio and Marcelina, Rogelio (+), Esteban Jr. and Fely, and Cristino (+), her grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Her remains lie at the family residence at Barangay Bungro, Luna, La Union. Interment will be tomorrow, May 24, 2005.

REYNALDO SALLAN SANCHEZ SR.

'REY'

(FORMER CELTICS BAND)

Peacefully joined his Creator on May 22, 2005 at the age of 63.

His bereaved wife **Bombing**; children **Ging** and **Boyet Bagasan**, **Ogie** and **Guia Precilla**; grandchildren **Chloe, Gieo, Camille, Gianne** and **Justine**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at La Bien Chapel, Rizal Funeral Homes, Inc., Cementina St., Pasay City.

Interment will be on Saturday, May 28, 2005 at 8:00 a.m. at Loyola Memorial Park, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

In Loving Memory

On the First Death Anniversary of

LUZ TANSECO de la PEÑA

widow of the late **Emilio Banzon de la Peña**

She will be remembered in Masses tomorrow, May 25, 2005,
at the following:

Sta. Maria Assumpta Church, Bulacan, Bulacan	6:30 a.m.
Church of the Holy Sacrifice, U.P. Diliman, Q.C.	12:00 noon
San Isidro Labrador Church, Tandang Sora, Q.C.	6:30 p.m.
De la Peña Residence, Bulacan, Bulacan	4:00 p.m.; 8:00 p.m.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This is to inform the public that
JULIUS MAGNITO GELISANGA JR.
whose picture appears herein
is no longer connected with
Insular Life Health Care, Inc. (I-Care)
since April 23, 2005. Any transaction made
or which he may, hereafter, undertake
in behalf of I-Care shall not be honored
by the company.

(PDI–May 24, 2005)

HIRING

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LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
Ang Bangkong May Damdaming-Bayan
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites interested suppliers who are (a) duly licensed Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships; or (b) 60% Filipino owned partnerships/corporations; or (c) two or more suppliers forming into joint ventures jointly and severally liable; or (d) cooperatives duly registered with the CDA; with largest single contract, similar to the items for bid, for the last 2 years, at least equal to 50% of the approved budget; and with Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) at least equal to the approved budget, to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following items:

ITB No.	Item / Description	Approved Budget	Source of Funds
2005-138	1 lot Supply of Thermal Printers and Supplies: 3 units Thermal Printer, Full Color 80 rolls Ribbon for the Thermal Printer YMCK (good for 20,000 cards) 32 rolls Film for the Thermal Printer HDP Film (good for 20,000 cards)	P 2,743,273.00	LBP Funds
	1 lot Supply of Cameras and Accessories: 3 units Camera 3 units Adaptor 3 units Tripod	59,750.00	LBP Funds
	3 bxs. Cleaning Kit	7,030.35	LBP Funds
	3 bxs. Pen Tablet (Siglite Electronic Pen)	10,500.00	LBP Funds

Bidding of the above requirements is scheduled on **June 15, 2005 at 1:00 p.m.** and the Bid Documents may be obtained from the Procurement Division of the General Services Department, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila, **upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P1,000.00.**

Interested suppliers are requested to attend the Pre-Bid Conference scheduled on **May 31, 2005** at the 25th Floor, Conference Room, LANDBANK Plaza, Malate, Manila.

All particulars relative to the **Qualification/Eligibility, Bid Bond, Performance Bond, Pre-bid Conference, Bid Evaluation and Award of Contract** shall be governed by the provisions of **RA 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.**

Only those bidders who comply with the Bank's requirements shall be eligible to participate in the bidding.

LANDBANK reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to declare the bidding a failure or waive any defect or informality and to accept bids as may be considered most advantageous to the Bank.

COMMITTEE ON BIDS AND AWARDS

(PDI – May 17 & 24, 2005)

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Quezon City

ANNOUNCEMENT OF BIDDING

The National Food Authority (NFA) wishes to announce that it will be conducting a bidding on **June 09, 2005** at **10:00 a.m.** at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila, among all interested rice suppliers for the **supply of maximum 100,000 MT, 5% MOLSO long grain white rice, 5%** and **15% brokens** in 50 kilograms net capacity polypropylene bags with an appropriated budget from corporate resources of **Php 1.88B**. Source countries shall be Thailand, Vietnam, China, Pakistan, Australia and/or U.S.A.

All interested suppliers are required to submit quotations for all specifications on CFR FO basis, Documents Against Acceptance (D/A) with a tenor of fifteen (15) days from receipt by NFA of the complete set of original documents for payment and on the basis of a mandatory countertrade and countertrade performed on best effort. Otherwise, bids shall be considered non-responsive. Arrival period shall be as follows:

Arrival Period		Percentage of Volume to be Offered
NLT July 15, 2005	—	At Least 50%
NLT August 15, 2005	—	Balance

Government suppliers and private suppliers who have delivered to the NFA within the last two (2) years (2003/2004) and do not have a bad track record may be awarded the following maximum volume:

SUPPLIER	VOLUME
government (with good track record)	100,000 MT
private (with good track record)	25,000 MT
Government/private (without track record)	15,000 MT

However, suppliers and/or source companies with pending import-related accounts/liability prior 2003 are considered to have bad track records and are not allowed to participate in the bid.

Minimum volume to be offered per supplier shall be 10,000 MT per specification. Vessels to be utilized should have a maximum load capacity of 15,000 MT.

All bidders are required to post a bid bond equivalent to 10% of the highest value of offered quantity in the form of cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank.

Winning bidders are required to submit a performance bond equivalent to 10% of the value of the awarded quantity within three (3) banking days after receipt of the notice of award in the form cashier's/manager's check issued by a reputable bank in Metro Manila or an irrevocable standby Letter of Credit issued by a reputable commercial bank or in the case of an irrevocable stand-by L/C issued by a foreign bank, the same shall be confirmed by a reputable local bank. Bid bond can be converted to performance bond.

List of Eligibility Requirements and instructions to bidders may be secured starting **16 May 2005** thru MR. TOMAS R. ESCAREZ, Assistant Department Manager and MR. NESTOR U. PUANGCO, Division Chief III, Directorate for Marketing Operations, 5th Floor, NFA, Matimyas Bldg., 101 E. Rodriguez Sr. Ave., Quezon City with telephone numbers 712-1564; 742-4140; 743-8696; 711-7433; 740-1977; 712-1708; and 712-1572.

The terms of reference and offer sheets will be available from **May 16 to June 08, 2005** (8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.) upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P7,500.00.

The pre-bidding conference will be held on **May 25, 2005** at **10:00 a.m.** at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila.

Submission of bids will be on **June 09, 2005 between 8:00 a.m. to 9:55 a.m.** at the FOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTER BUILDING FTI Complex, Taguig, Metro Manila. Opening of bids will start exactly at **10:00 a.m.**

The National Food Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals, to waive any required formality or defect therein and may accept the bid/s which is deemed most advantageous to the Agency.

JESSUP P. NAVARRO
Deputy Administrator and
Chairman, BAC

(PDI – May 16 & 24, 2005)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The services of **ENGR. PORFIRIO A. YUSINGBO JR.**, whose picture appears above and with address at Blk. 23 Lot 27 Tagbilaran St., Alabang Hills, Alabang, Muntinlupa City have been terminated by **WOODRIDGE PROPERTIES, INC.** for cause effective last Jan. 06, 2005.

Any transaction with Mr. Yusingbo shall no longer be honored.

(PDI–May 24, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
SILAY CITY GOVERNMENT
Silay City, Negros Occidental
Telephone No(s): (034) 495-0061 to 69
Local No(s): 234 & 236
Fax No.: (034) 495-6711
dgledesma@silaycity.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

SILAY CITY GOVERNMENT invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

CONSTRUCTION OF COVERED COURT
SILAY CITY PUBLIC PLAZA, SILAY CITY, NEGROS OCCIDENTAL

The Approved Budget is **P5,433,339.68** chargeable against **CITY WIDE LAND & INFRA PROJECTS for the year 2005.**

Application Forms for Eligibility may be secured from the **GENERAL SERVICES OFFICE, Silay City** starting **May 24, 2005 - June 10, 2005.**

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **June 28, 2005**, at **2:00 p.m.** at the **Operation's Center, Sen. Jose C. Locsin Cultural & Civil Center, Silay City**. Likewise sealed bids shall be received by the **General Services Office, Silay City** not later than **2:00 p.m.** on **July 12, 2005** at the same venue and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

SILAY CITY GOVERNMENT reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to SILAY CITY GOVERNMENT.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. RODNEY K. RUBICA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI–May 24 & 31, 2005)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Third Elementary Education Project
DIVISION PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT UNIT
Bids and Awards Committee
San Jose de Buenavista, Antique

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Loan No. 4108-PH

To All Qualified Bidders:

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines, through the Department of Education (DepEd) has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (hereinafter referred to as IBRD) towards the cost of financing the Third Elementary Education Project (TEEP), and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments for civil works component of the project. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*

2 The DepEd Division Project Implementation Support Unit (DepEd-DPISU) for TEEP through the Division Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Construction/Repair of school buildings itemized in four (4) packages (the "Works") in the Municipality of Valderrama in the Province of Antique. The following are the project packages:

Package/District/School	NC	R	Scope of Works
Package I – Project Reference No. 02-001-2005			
Valderrama			
1 Valderrama Central School (Bldg. 1)	4		Construction of One (1) Unit 4-Classroom SB
2. Valderrama Central School (Bldg. 2)	4		Construction of One (1) Unit 4-Classroom SB
3. Valderrama Central School	6		Construction of One (1) Unit 6-Classroom SB
Sub-total, Package I	*14*		
Package II – Project Reference No. 02-002-2005			
Pandanan			
1. Pandanan Elementary School (Bldg. 1)	2		Construction of One (1) Unit 2-Classroom SB
2. Pandanan Elementary School (Bldg. 2)	2		Construction of One (1) Unit 2-Classroom SB
3. Pandanan Elementary School		3	Repair of One (1) Unit 3-Classroom BLSB
Sub-total, Package II	*4*	*3*	
Package III – Project Reference No. 02-003-2005			
Iglinab			
Iglinab Elementary School	2		Construction of One (1) Unit 2-Classroom SB
Sub-total, Package III	*2*		
Package IV – Project Reference No. 02-004-2005			
Buluangan I			
Buluangan I Elementary School	3		Construction of One (1) Unit 3-Classroom SB
Sub-total, Package IV	*3*		
TOTAL	*23*	*3*	

Legend:
NC -New Construction
R -Repair
SB -School Building
BLSB -Bagong Lipunan Type School Building

Local contractors should be accredited with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) with a category of at least Small B for all packages.

3 Bidding documents may be purchased at the DepEd Division Office of Antique, Binirayan Street, San Jose de Buenavista, Antique starting May 24, 2005 for a nonrefundable fee of *One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 1,500.00)* per package. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.

4 Bids shall be valid for a period of ninety (90) days after Bid opening and must be accompanied by a security in the amount of *two and half percent (2.5%)* of total bid price, and shall be delivered to Division's Bids and Awards Committee, Department of Education - Division Office of Antique, Binirayan Street, San Jose de Buenavista, Antique on or before *10:00 a.m.*, **June 23, 2005** at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend

5 Prior to Bid Opening, a Pre-Bid Conference will be held on *10:00 a.m., June 9, 2005* at the same address indicated above.

(SGD.) **VICTOR G. DE GRACIA, Jr.**
Division Bids and Awards Committee
Chairperson

(PDI–May 24, 2005)

NFA assures stable rice supply, prices in Mindanao

THE NATIONAL Food Authority assured stable supply and prices of government rice in Mindanao as the agency continues to perform its distribution activities in the area. NFA regional director for region 12 Edgar Bentulan said that NFA rice remains available through the agency's various accredited retailers in the region especially through Bigasan ni Gloria sa Palengke (BGP) outlets. These outlets are situated in major public markets in Sultan Kudarat, South Cotabato and North Cotabato provinces including the cities of Koronadal, Tacurong and Kidapawan.Bentulan said NFA regular-milled (RMR) and well-milled rice (WMR) in the region are being sold at P16 and P18 per kilogram, respectively. The region undertakes monitoring through the NFA Task Force Rice Monitoring Teams which coordinate with the local government units to monitor the presence of affordable and good quality NFA rice in the markets.

For more information on NFA programs, please send inquiries via Text NFA through mobile number 0917-6210927. For information on programs of the Department of Agriculture, please visit the DA's official website at www.da.gov.ph.

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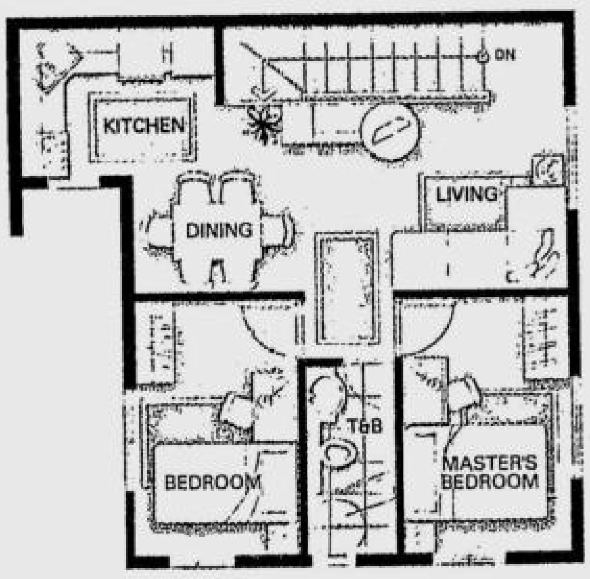
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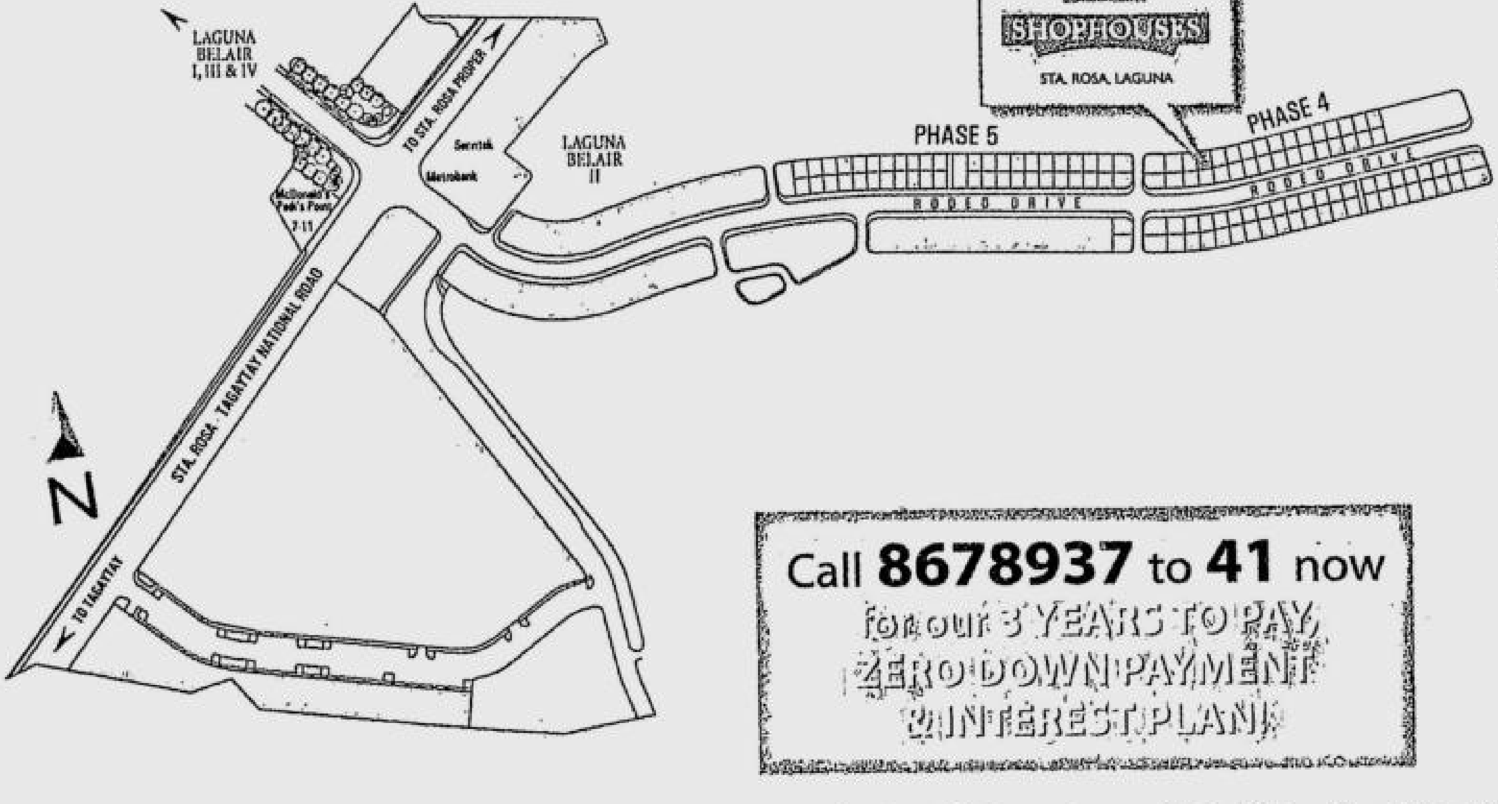
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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS ● TUESDAY FITNESS ● WEDNESDAY 2BU ● THURSDAY FOOD ● FRIDAY FASHION & BEAUTY

Migraine need not be a big headache

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

MILLIONS suffer from headaches daily but few understand them or how to manage them.

The sudden but persistent pounding in your head could be due to many factors—muscular tension, indigestion, menstrual problems, emotional or mental stress, hormonal imbalance, food toxicity/allergy, anemia or nutritional deficiency.

A headache is also a symptom of a disease in the head or body—brain tumor, injuries, high blood pressure, stroke and conditions of the ear, throat, teeth/gums, nose or eyes (sinusitis, eye strain, etc.).

It is also common for people with sluggish bowels (those who move less than 1-2 times daily) to experience headaches. Poor posture is another culprit as it creates tension in the neck and shoulders.

Other triggers you didn't know about include foam mattresses/pillows, cigarette smoke and unventilated, stuffy rooms.

Not all in your head

A myth that continues to this day is that "people with migraines are hypochondriacs, but in fact the condition is biological and has a strong genetic composition," according to Dr. Merle Diamond, associate director of the Diamond Headache Clinic in Chicago.

Studies have also shown that if a parent suffers from migraine, there is a 50-percent chance that the child will have them.

A migraine is called a headache but it is actually a disease. When an attack occurs, the brain stem becomes highly hyperactive, causing a drop in the level of serotonin, a chemical the brain needs to relax.

This results in the swelling of blood vessels surrounding the brain and, consequently, pain.

Some people may think they have a headache when it is really a migraine.

What to look out for

If you have one or more of these, then it's a migraine:

- moderate to severe pain that occurs on one or both sides of the head
- sensation of throbbing
- pain worsening with any activity you do

At least two of these symptoms:

- nausea and/or vomiting
- sensitivity to light
- sensitivity to noise

Stop the triggers

The human body is so sensitive to external as well as internal stimuli. Recent reports indicate that pressure changes in a plane/cabin, an anticipated storm/typhoon and even an orgasm can cause migraines. Add to the list dairy products, coffee, alcohol and chocolates.

The only way you can check your sensitivity is to be more aware of them through monitoring.

Other preventives are, curiously enough:

- Botox not only stops wrinkles but also muscular contractions or migraines, says Dr. Alexander Mauskop, director of the New York Headache Center. Injections in the forehead, temples and neck can control migraine up to three months. Of course, the cost is high.
- An anti-seizure drug called Topemax in the United States still awaits approval by the Food and Drug Administration.
- Non-drug and natural treatments include:

—Biofeedback: A form of mind-body therapy that teaches you to relax the muscles during stressful times.

—Water therapy: Take more than the required eight to 10 glasses a day. Increase to 14 glasses.

—Tomato juice: This natural booster works.

—Ginger tea: Improves circulation.

—Celery: As tea (dice a few pieces and add to hot water) or eat two stalks as a remedy.

—Apple cider vinegar: Add 1 tsp to a full glass of water to detoxify

—Cayenne: ¼ teaspoon in any juice for circulation

—Chamomile tea: For anxiety-type headaches

—Feverfew: As tea, take two times daily for two to three months as a preventive or take one capsule three times daily.

—Black cohosh: As daily herbal tea, a powerful relaxant

—Passion flower: A tea for nervousness

—Peppermint/spearmint tea: For indigestive type of headaches

—White willow bark: The natural aspirin. Add 10-20 drops in juice or take as tea in warm water.

—Gingko Biloba: 60 mg, morning and afternoon for migraine preventive

—Calcium and magnesium: A calming combination (prepared in bottles in health food stores)

—Potassium: A mineral supplement, 99 mg, 1 tablet every hour until the headache is gone (not to exceed eight hours)

—Vitamin B Complex (50-100 mg): 1 capsule daily to calm the nerves

—Soaking: Soak the feet in hot water 1-2 minutes. Alternate with cold water.

Self-healing visualization

Sit comfortably. Close your eyes. Breathe slowly, calmly. With the power of your imagination, see your head with a pile of ice on it. The ice is slowly melting, cooling your head. Your head feels lighter, headaches slowly disappear until they are completely gone.

Love and light!

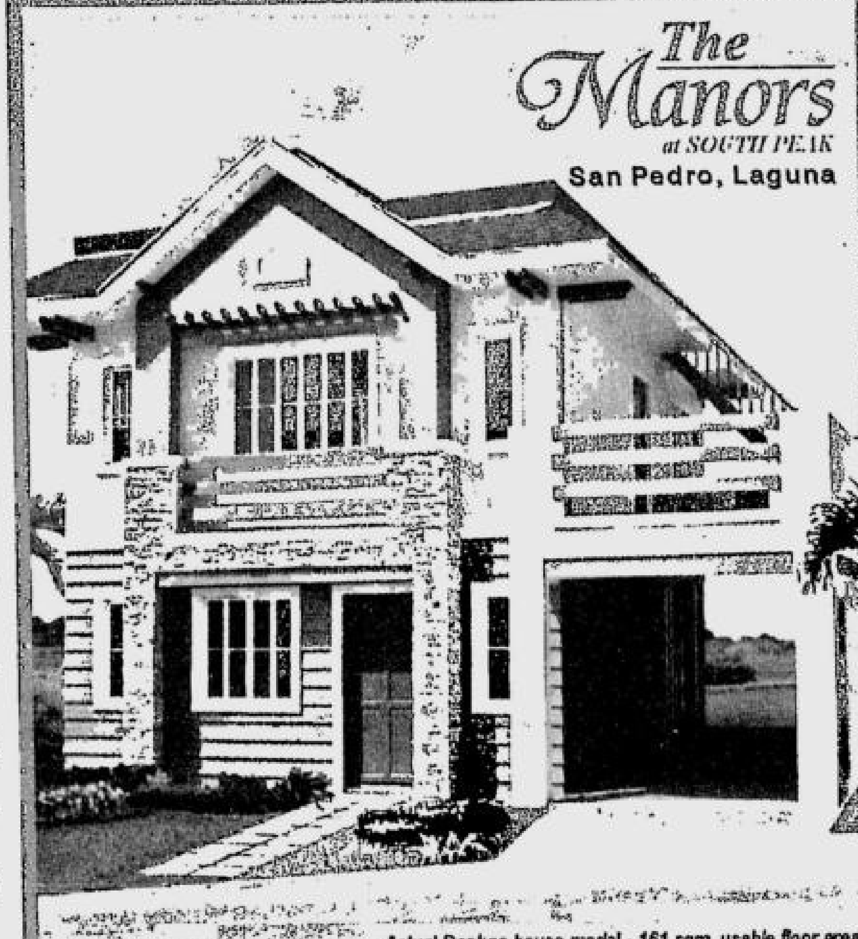
Reference: A Treasury of Natural First Aid Remedies from A-Z, James Kusick

Good Housekeeping, August 2004

Earl Mindell's Vitamin Bible for the 21st Centuty

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIQUEZ

The Manors at SOUTH PEAK
San Pedro, Laguna



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Create your own mini-workout program

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

PEOPLE with no time to exercise can get as fit as people who go to the gym regularly if they do multiple 10-minute exercise sessions spread throughout the day.

The mini-workout approach is backed by considerable scientific research proving that one does not need to exercise continuously for 30-60 minutes to get results.

However, mini-workouts are not effective for all people. If you are an athlete or a serious fitness/sports buff, short exercise sessions will not be enough for your goals, but you can effectively use mini-workouts as an alternative during hectic spells in your life.

Mini-workouts are most appropriate for people who are sedentary and just beginning to exercise, and for busy people with no time to work out.

Create your own program

The three main components of fitness—cardiovascular endurance, muscular strength and flexibility can all be addressed with short exercise sessions, according to Dr. Glenn Gaesser, head researcher of a major study at the University of Virginia.

In his book, "The Spark," Gaesser recommends 15 10-minute "sparks" of activity per week. This translates to two-and-a-half hours of exercise per week or a 30-minute workout five times a week.

Gaesser divides the 15 sessions into the following:

- 7-10 "aerobic sparks." Examples are brisk walking, stair climbing, dancing and calisthenics.
- Two to four "strength training sparks." You can use dumbbells, ankle weights, rubber bands or do body weight exercises like push-ups and squats. Standing yoga poses also qualify as lower body strength training exercises.
- Two to four "flexibility sparks." These are stretching exercises.

CREATE/ C3

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A Blemish Eraser That Really *Works!*

Picture-perfect skin can now be a reality with IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment. No other procedure has ever been developed that can accomplish so much with so little risk and downtime.

Janet Ley, enjoying her clear, flawless skin..

One satisfied client, Janet Ley, relates her happiness with IPL: "I like it. I really like it because after only my second treatment, my freckles are gone!"

IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment helps banish freckles, dark spots, and spider veins without a trace. According to Janet, "I believe my freckles became more prominent as I got older. So whenever I went out of the house, I would use face powder to cover them up. But now I don't use anything anymore because they're all gone! And now people would tell me that I have really nice, flawless skin."

IPL is a gentle, non-invasive treatment that uses a broad spectrum of light to treat the face, neck, chest, back, hands and virtually anywhere that sun damage or blemishes show. It uses the Intense Pulsed Light technology to correct a variety of skin conditions such as skin imperfections: freckles, skin discoloration, signs of ageing, age spots, unsightly spider veins, broken capillaries, rosacea and other blemishes. Facial Care Centre's Dr. Maria Isabelita Joya says, "IPL's amazing results include: better skin tone, reduced blotchiness, pigmentations and broken blood vessels, smoother surface texture, and a more youthful-looking skin."

To restore an overall youthful look, IPL can simultaneously treat a wide variety of skin concerns safely and effectively. It erases skin damage with minor disruption on the skin's surface unlike other conventional treatments. As another satisfied client, Dr. Ariel Torres, would attest: "I'm an avid golfer so I'm very much exposed to the sun. That's how I had freckles. And I've tried every whitening product you can possibly think of: whitening cream, whitening lotion, sunblock, scrub, I even bought this thing from Hong Kong that you're supposed to drink to lighten your skin...nothing! It lightens up your skin for a while but you can't expose yourself to the sun anymore. And for avid players like me, that's totally unthinkable! So when I tried IPL, I was really impressed. Just after the first treatment, there were already visible, dramatic results! IPL is really the only treatment that worked for me."

Dr. Joya performing the IPL Photorejuvenation Treatment on a client.

Another satisfied client, Dr. Ariel Torres.

Like Dr. Torres and Janet Ley, many satisfied clients have reported a reduction in age spots, freckles, and other skin discoloration. Most women who lead active and busy lifestyles are happy with the fact that aside from the visible improvement in their skin, they experience relatively no downtime. This means that one can actually have fairer, even-toned, glowing skin after approximately 30 minutes of treatment, and can go to work on the same day, as if nothing happened at all!

Dr. Maria Isabelita Joya with the IPL machine.

Now isn't this the best news for your skin?

To know more about IPL Photorejuvenation, just call Facial Care Centre at 892-SKIN. That's 892-7546.

STATUESQUE southern lady Aurora Lapuz S. with her husband, *el simpatico* Spanish Ambassador Ignacio Sagaz

SHOM supporters. Pocholo Borromeo, Mary Ann and Jo Mari Chan, Esther Capistrano, Debbie Spathelf, Girl Velasquez, Josie Valderrama, Joey Soriano, Candy Ledesma, Mary Anne Borromeo and Belen Castro

THE MANILA SUPREMES. Jo-Lynne Sutherland, Aurora Sagaz and Agnes de Kok

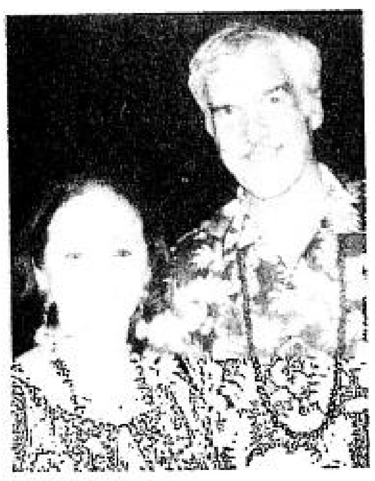
LET'S do the Charleston. The Italian ambassador's wife, Clara Colesanti

IN THE PINK. *Moi* with Consul of Angola Helen Ong

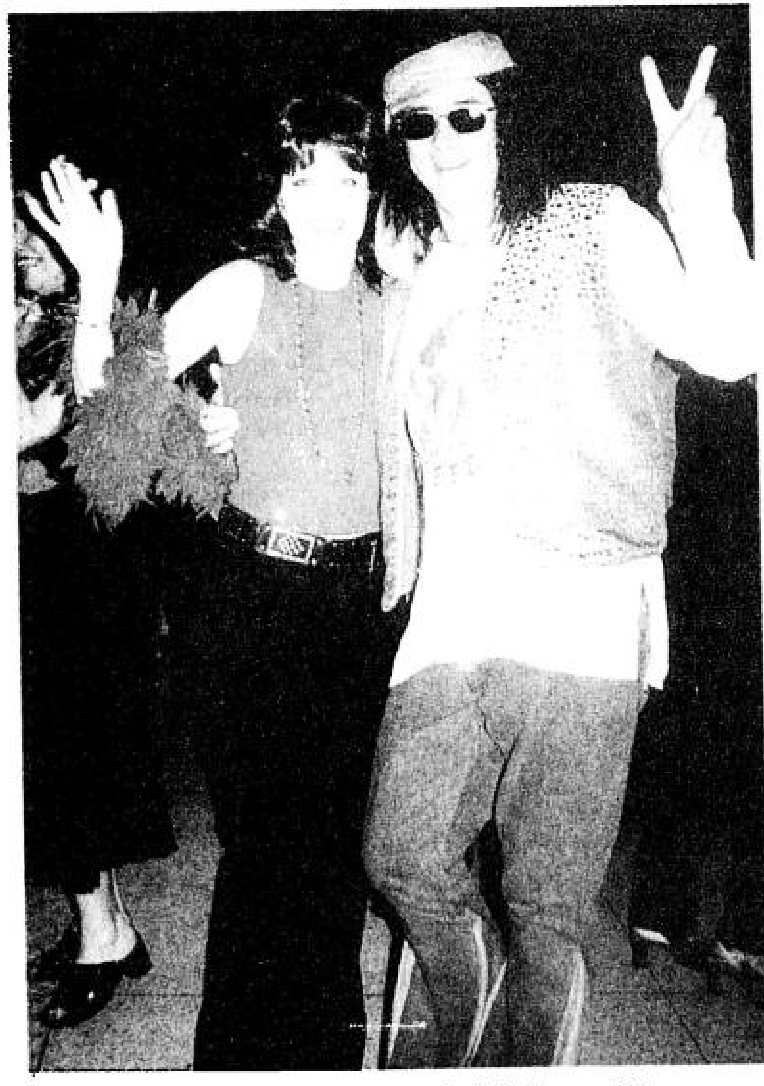
HEADTURNERS. Mandy Taboada, Lizzie Zobel, Carolina Ramirez and Emilia Rivas

WOMAN of style, ultra glam philanthropist Meldy Cojuangco

SHANGRI-LA'S royal couple. Elegant Katherine Mabanta Z. and brilliant Tomas Zita Jr.



WORLD traveler Nene Tuason Vda. de Quimson with charmer Peter Beckingham



WE love Woodstock. HSBC's first couple, Julie Ann and Warner Manning

The SHOM must go on

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

WHO says our town's diplomatic set is stiff, always dignified and laid back. Well, that may be so, *palanggas*. But not during the fantastic evening when the spitfire women known as the Spouses of the Heads of Mission (SHOM) hosted a rocking " '60s-'70s Retro Evening" with an excellent garden buffet dinner, entertainment and fun dining. The event was in aid of SHOM's Philippine charities, *palanggas.*

This first-of-a-kind happening was held at the magnificent lawn in the residence of one of our town's most popular ambassadors, *el muy simpatico* Ignacio Sagaz of Spain, and his adorable well-loved wife, statuesque eye-catching southern lady, **Aurora Lapuz S.** Everyone had a blast!

Well, that night, the diplomatic corps let their hair down, and with diplomats and their wives providing the rip-roaring entertainment, supported by an excellent band playing tunes of the Woodstock generation to the wild '70s.

With booze flowing all night and a buffet table being refilled endlessly, the hotshot invitees were in perfect shape to party, *palanggas*. While they rocked and rolled, a successful silent auction was taking place. Tons of donations in cash were made and raffle tickets were sold.

All this went to loads of charities of SHOM, like the Gawad Kalinga (housing for the poor), assistance for typhoon victims, Zonta Club of Makati and, the often overlooked Hospicio de San Jose in Manille.

The 300 or so present at the big affair all agreed that when the diplomatic pack partied, they really went for it wholeheartedly!

And, without batting an eyelash, Ambassador Ignacio and his lady Aurora were definitely the perfect cool hosts for this fab happening.

Summer scent rocks

Upscale Rustan's rhythmic Salsa Bash launched Escada's *tres* elegant summer edition fragrance, Rockin' Rio.

The event stopped traffic in front of Shangri-La Manila, as Manille's fashionistas heeded the call of the colorful Brazilian-inspired invitation.

I've seen at the world-famous carnival in Rio, filled with people who know how to party and let it all hang loose in the spirit of fun, the joie de vivre and sensuality.

Well, *palanggas*, the Puro Ritmo band and **Lala Dinglasan** and her dancers kept the invitees on their toes with the hot sounds of salsa, samba and bossa nova! **Mary Lou Prieto Lovina** and **Menchie Abelardo** wowed us all with their sleek and sassy Latin American footwork. They were named Best Salsa dancers of the night.

Greggy Vera Cruz was applauded for his sizzling-hot red number—a crocheted poncho top with matching red pants and hat. **Vicky Montenegro** was chosen for being most like the Girl from Ipanema.

The exhibition of the Brazilian martial arts-dance, capoiera, was absolutely awesome, thanks to the Escola Brasiliera de Capoiera, Philippines, which, by the way, cool glam gal **Vicky Zubiri**, is about to master. Not bad, huh!

MEGA couturier Jean Margaret Goulbourn

The eye-catching ambience, styled by **Gino Marasigan** of the Shangri-La's third level garden, had a burst of colorful summer blossoms added to Escada's fuchsia and yellow carnival décor.

Angelo Villanueva's South American touch made the fun program so hot like it was running a Brazilian fever.

The Escada Rockin' Rio fragrance was unveiled with a burst of confetti. The air was filled with the fragrance of its cool citrus notes, so perfect for summer, dahlings.

Some of the lovelies who graced the ravin' party were Escada loyalists **Susan Campos**; **Happy David**; *my palangga*, pacesetter **Ethel Timbol**; **Ronnie Carlos**; fashionable **Lisa Ilarde Cuenca**; **Agoo Bengzon**; **Astrud Crisologo**; and Absinth's **Christine San Diego**.

They were among the many rocking their hips to the hot Brazilian rhythm.

Check out Escada's Rockin' Rio, available at major department stores nationwide, *palanggas.*

WOMEN of distinction. Mila Wales and Marisa Olasolo Vda. de Rocha

HSBC'S Warner Manning and host Trisha Chiongban

SUSAN Campos and Mary Lou Prieto Lovina

BRIDGES@COM's Toni Gregory with Rustan's Toni Abad

ABIGAIL and Anna Villaraza

STYLIST Angelo Villanueva and Lala Dinglasan

ANNA Sia and Len Olbes

MIGUEL Rodriguez with Rustan's Belle Pesayco and Escada brand manager Mara Esguerra

Did father's watch cause negative events?

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

"MY PROBLEM is about a beautiful watch my father gave me in May 2004. He bought it at a hotel auction... More often than not, when I am wearing (it), a series of unfortunate events happen to me.

"Recently, the paint of my car got scratched when I left the watch inside the car. A few months ago, when I wore (it), I failed the exam for a job.

"I have read a couple of your articles about surplus items; and that there was an ancient civilization that believed in the'*akasha*'... that explained principles behind surplus items. I also read your article about a jacket that your secretary asked you to hold, which you later found out belonged to then rebel leader, Gringo Honasan.

"In one of your columns you also explained the disadvantages of buying clothes from *ukay-ukay*, because the new owner could inherit the mood of the original owner. But you also wrote about the power of the mind—that if our mind refused (such) beliefs and ideas, we would not inherit the mood of the original owner.

"Are there other ways (to) reverse the mood or whatever you call that thing that (causes) unfortunate events whenever I am wearing the watch? I really like (it), that's why I don't want to sell it.

"I have attached a picture of the watch. I have read in another article about a picture of your daughter's fiancé that she faxed to you and (enabled you to) say he had some secrets that your daughter did not know."

PATRICK JAMES L. GARCIA

Thank you Patrick, for your interest.

It may be premature to conclude that the unfortunate events you experienced were connected to the watch your father gave you. There is no logical connection between wearing that watch and the negative events, unless you can statistically establish the connection beyond mere chance or coincidence.

One common error in logic that many people commit is mistaking a previous incident to be the cause of a latter event. For example, you see a black cat cross your path and later you have an accident. You are likely to attribute your subsequent accident to the cat.

Error in logic

This reasoning error is known in logic as "Post hoc, ergo propter hoc" fallacy, meaning, "After this, therefore because of this." Just because an event follows another does not mean the former caused the latter.

For example, a politician is quoted as saying, "After Mayor X was elected, crime in the city doubled." Therefore Mayor X caused the crime rate to double? It does not logically follow.

Another thing, I don't think I used the word "surplus items" in my column. I neither know where you got the term, nor what it means.

What I said was, if you hold an object, specially with accompanying strong emotion, you leave something of yourself (i.e. an invisible imprint) in that object, that everything we do is recorded in the *akasha* or time/space.

Now to answer your question: Are there ways to reverse the negative imprints or influences in objects? Yes, but it depends on the nature of these imprints or influences.

If the negative influence is caused by an evil spirit, that spirit has to be exorcised or expelled from the object. If the imprint is caused by negative emotions of the previous owner, or if violent death resulted in connection with that object, it may be better to destroy or burn that object rather than use it.

Consider the black Porsche driven by actor James Dean when he had that fatal accident. All of the people who subsequently bought or used the car died violently.

According to what I read, Dean's car killed no less than five other persons before it was sent to a junk yard.

As for your father's watch, I cannot tell whether the unfortunate incidents that happened to you could really be attributed to it. You did not even mention if your father is alive or dead.

Is there any logical reason why the watch could have a negative effect on you? Can you find out who originally owned it?

Another fallacy

Here's another example known in logic as the "fallacy of jumping to conclusions."

A reader from Koronadal City wrote about what they believed was a picture of a headless man that apparently appeared on stage while a performance was going on during a fiesta at a subdivision.

The "headless man" appeared to be wearing a Barong Tagalog but they said nobody on stage was in Barong Tagalog when the picture was taken. The reader sent the controversial picture by e-mail and asked for my opinion, as it created panic in the area.

When my staff and I examined the photograph, we also initially thought it was a transparent image of a headless man in barong Tagalog. But upon closer scrutiny, we came to the conclusion that the image was merely an electric fan in the foreground caught by the camera as it rotated sideways. It created the illusion of a human figure with no head.

Address letters to this column to Prince Plaza I, 106 Legazpi St., Legazpi Village, Makati City. Call 8107245 or 8926806 for information on seminars I conduct. E-mail jlicauco@edsamail.com.ph or visit http:// www.jlicauco.shorturl.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program 7-8 p.m. every Sunday

Bath time with 'friends'

CRABTREE & Evelyn invites you to enter the world of Nursery Tails and its distinctive characters—Minnie Moo Cow, Liza Lamb, Pudy Cat, Sadie Squirrel and Sunny Bunny.

To make bath time enjoyable for kids, each product in Crabtree & Evelyn's new children's range carries an illustration of a special animal friend beautifully drawn by British illustrator Alison Jay.

Safe as well as fun, the products are formulated for a child's delicate skin and have all been dermatologist- and pediatrician-tested and approved.

Crabtree & Evelyn worked closely with specialists to ensure that the ultra-mild formulations were suitable for the delicate skin of young children. Nursery Tails only contains the mildest of ingredients.

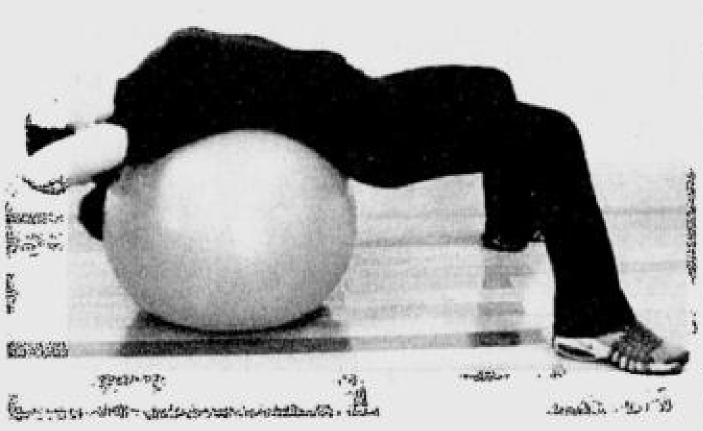
All products in the Nursery Tails Collection are scented with a low level of a soothing bouquet of geranium and rose with delicate powdery notes.

Liza Lamb Body Wash and Shampoo, 250ml/P800—Even fussy tots will look forward to bath time with this gentle combination wash and shampoo. It is pH-balanced for gently cleansing delicate skin, scalp and fine hair in a single step. Gentle on eyes, bath time will not be crying time.

Uza Lamb Gentle Shampoo and Body Wash—Rinses freely so there is never any build up.

EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

Supine backward bend on stability ball



This yoga-inspired exercise stretches the chest, abs and front of the hips.

Equipment:

Stability ball

Exercise technique:

1. Start by sitting on the ball with your legs hip width apart.
2. Slowly lower yourself into a flat position by walking your feet forward while you simultaneously lean backwards.
3. Once the ball is behind your lower back, place your hands behind your head.
4. Carefully arch backwards by dropping your head and shoulders.
5. Hold for 10-15 seconds.
6. Slowly lift your head and shoulders. Return to the sitting position by walking your feet backwards as you simultaneously lean forward.

Performance tips:

1. Maintain an even rhythm of breathing.
2. To increase the stretch, straighten your legs so you can bend further backwards.
3. You can also drop your hands towards the floor.

Repetitions:

One or two times.

Partnership affirms center's stature

THE RECENT appointment of St. Luke's Medical Center as Philippine affiliate of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, the world's most prestigious cancer center, affirms the hospital's leadership in the diagnosis, treatment and management of cancer in the Philippines.

St. Luke's Cancer Institute has been in existence for 16 years, providing a multi-disciplinary approach in dealing with various kinds of cancer. Dr. Priscilla Caguioa, director, says the institute is the most comprehensive cancer center in the Philippines today and one of Asia's best-equipped for diagnostic and therapeutic treatment.

At least 10 different multidisciplinary conferences on breast, lungs, genito-urinary, gynecology, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal, head and neck, brain tumor, ophthalmologic and radiologic malignancies are conducted regularly at the cancer institute.

The institute also conducts patients forum for patients and their caregivers. Doctors and experts from various fields outside the medical profession discuss subjects ranging from latest medication to beauty tips.

At present, the Philippines is no. 1 in Asia in cancer incidence. Breast cancer is the most prevalent among women followed by cancer of the cervix, lungs and colon. For men, lung cancer is number one followed by cancer of the prostate, colon and liver.

The cancer institute is actively involved in several international clinical trials on new drugs and targeted therapy. It is conducting studies based on the Asian experience.

Among the institute's future plans is to strengthen research on specific programs for different types of cancer.

Early detection and appropriate treatment increases the chances of cure, Dr. Caguioa says. Education of lay people is the key to early detection and cure.

Call St. Luke's Cancer Institute at 7313001 local 5427 or e-mail cancerinstitute@stluke.com.ph.

Create your own mini-workout

From page C1

Guidelines

Any kind of physical activity is better than none but exercise researcher John Jakicic advises, "The effects are minimized significantly if you're just strolling through the mall, window-shopping." He suggests "walking with a purpose or as if you are going to miss your train."

You don't need a warm-up or cool-down if you are doing light weightlifting or light stretching. Cardiovascular mini-workouts like brisk walking don't need a warm-up either since these are normal lifestyle activities.

However, if you were going to do an all-out run as your mini-workout, then you would need to walk for two minutes as your warm-up, jog/run/sprint for six minutes, and cool-down by walking for two minutes. Only fit people should attempt vigorous mini-workouts.

Rope skipping is an excellent way to get a vigorous calorie-burning workout in 10-12 minutes. Try skipping for three minutes and marching in place for one minute.

If you are going to climb stairs, do intervals of one minute climbing and one minute marching in place. As your endurance improves, lengthen the time spent climbing.

Keep strength-training equipment like dumbbells or rubber bands handy either at work under your desk or in a corner of your bedroom. You can do muscle firming exercises at sporadic times during work or even during commercial breaks while watching television at home. There is a lot that you can accomplish in 10 minutes.

Next week, I'll give you sample upper and lower body, abdominal and stretching workouts that you can download from my website.

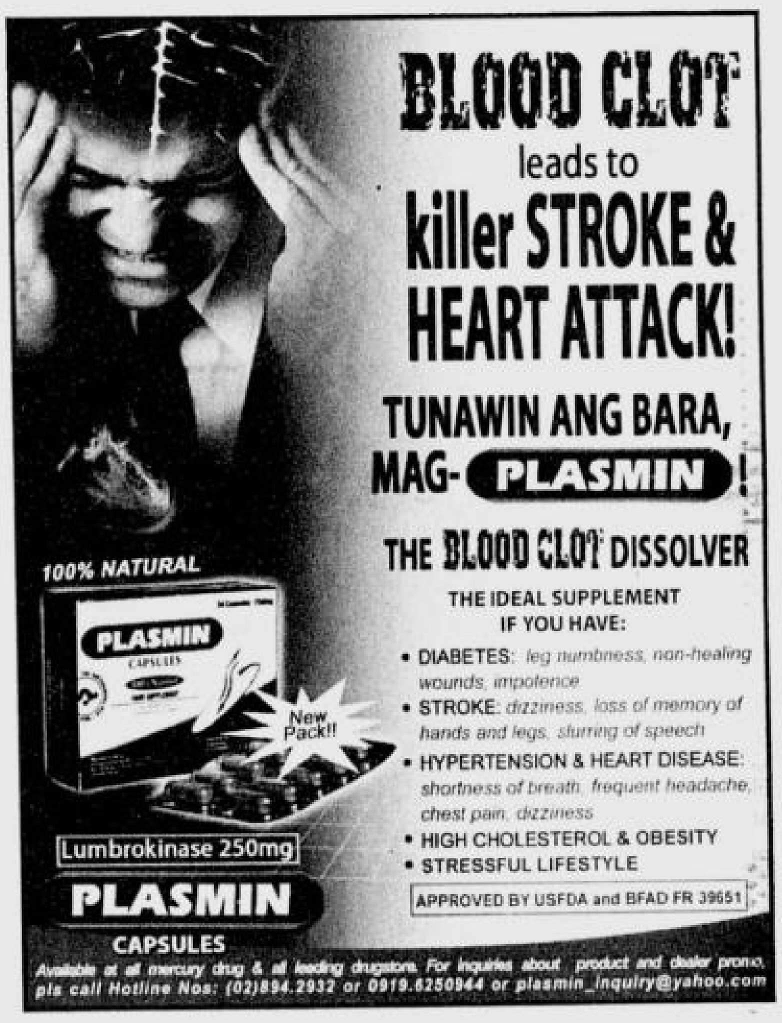
To make mini-workouts work for you, fit them into your daily routine. Gaesser recommends extending a walk that you normally would take. For example, if you walk to lunch every day, lengthen the route you usually take so you get additional minutes of walking.

Condition yourself through the Pavlovian principle by linking two activities together. In his classic experiment, behavioral psychologist Ivan Pavlov conditioned dogs to salivate at the sound of a ringing bell by initially linking food with the bell.

If you make it a point to walk every time you talk on your cell or cordless phone, you will find your feet automatically moving on their own as soon as you put the phone to your ear.

If you are serious about doing mini-workouts, plot your sessions on a graph and check off each activity as you accomplish it. Beginner exercisers who keep a record of their workouts are more successful than those who don't. When your workouts become a firmly entrenched habit, you won't need to keep track of your progress anymore.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info



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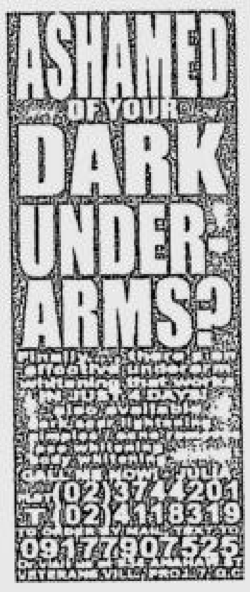

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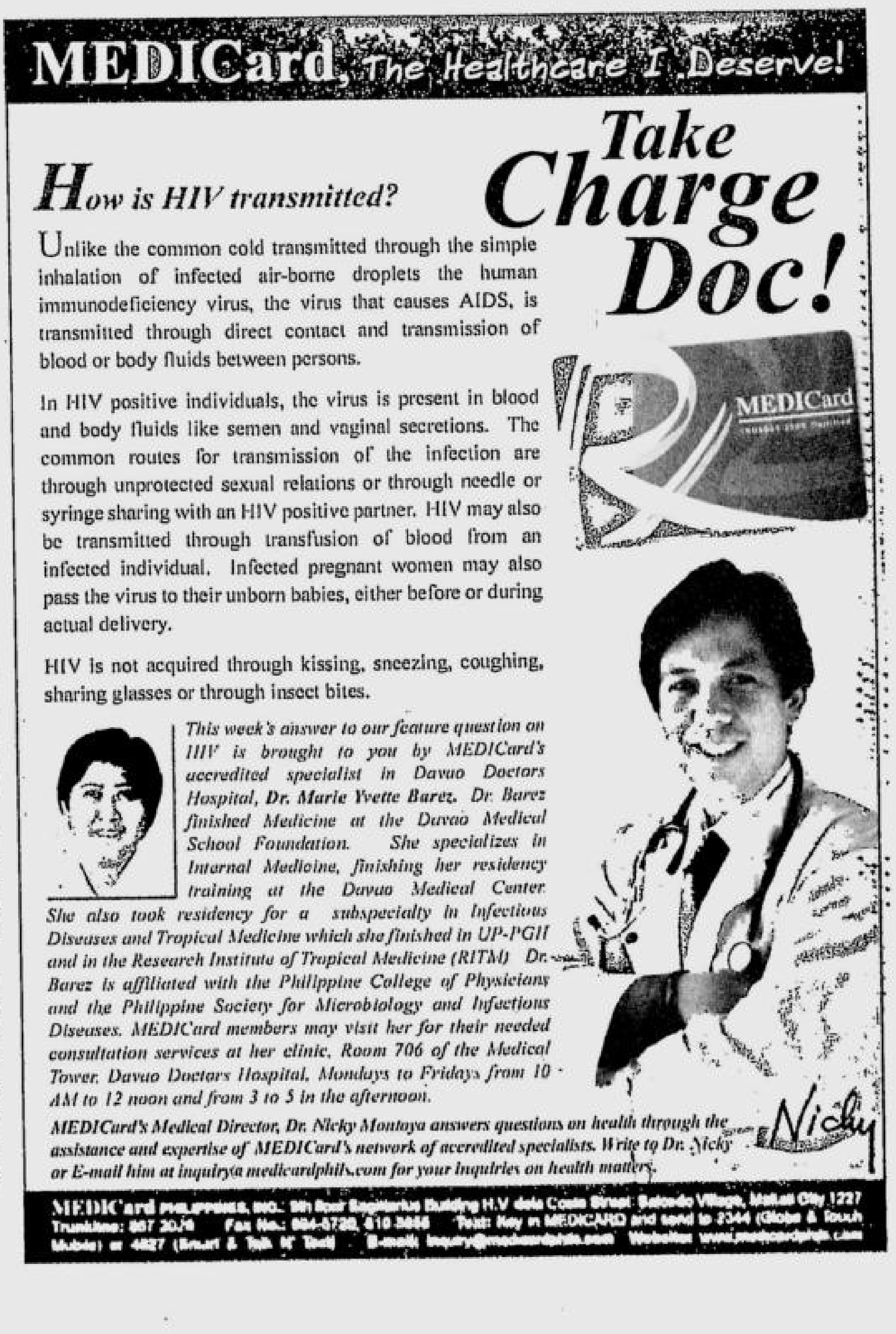

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How is HIV transmitted?

Unlike the common cold transmitted through the simple inhalation of infected air-borne droplets the human immunodeficiency virus, the virus that causes AIDS, is transmitted through direct contact and transmission of blood or body fluids between persons.

In HIV positive individuals, the virus is present in blood and body fluids like semen and vaginal secretions. The common routes for transmission of the infection are through unprotected sexual relations or through needle or syringe sharing with an HIV positive partner. HIV may also be transmitted through transfusion of blood from an infected individual. Infected pregnant women may also pass the virus to their unborn babies, either before or during actual delivery.

HIV is not acquired through kissing, sneezing, coughing, sharing glasses or through insect bites.

This week's answer to our feature question on HIV is brought to you by MEDICard's accredited specialist in Davao Doctors Hospital, Dr. Marie Yvette Barez. Dr. Barez finished Medicine at the Davao Medical School Foundation. She specializes in Internal Medicine, finishing her residency training at the Davao Medical Center. She also took residency for a subspecialty in Infectious Diseases and Tropical Medicine which she finished in UP-PGH and in the Research Institute of Tropical Medicine (RITM). Dr. Barez is affiliated with the Philippine College of Physicians and the Philippine Society for Microbiology and Infectious Diseases. MEDICard members may visit her for their needed consultation services at her clinic, Room 706 of the Medical Tower, Davao Doctors Hospital, Mondays to Fridays from 10 AM to 12 noon and from 3 to 5 in the afternoon.

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Nicky

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